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THE
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BY
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

WITH
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BY THE
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MINISTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHATEL, EDINBURGH.

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THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
ST. JOHN,

THE EVANGELIST AND APOSTLE,

BY
F. A. KRUMMACHER, D. D.

A WORK CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

WITH
A PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION ON GERMAN THEOLOGY,

BY THE
REV. JOHN W. FERGUSON, A. M.
MINISTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, EDINBURGH.

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PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION

ON

GERMAN THEOLOGY.

IN the history of Christianity, it is deeply interesting to observe, how human nature has presented the same obstacles to its doctrines and its precepts, at every period of time, while the character of its opposition has varied according to the circumstances of the age or country. It is with nations and communities, as it is with individuals ; they have a youth, a manhood, and an old age which steals on apace :—besides, whatever error may be mingled, either with the creed or the discipline of a church, although at first it may appear of little moment, it is, as it were, evil seed sown, which in process of time produces a luxuriant crop of poisonous fruit, and terminates in consequences from

which the original authors would start back with horror and surprise.

At the period immediately preceding the Reformation, even on the admission of the Roman Catholic priesthood, the corruption of manners was extreme. The lofty requisitions of Christianity were disregarded, while its doctrines were so interpreted as not to disturb the peace of its professors ; and what men anxiously wished to believe, they had little difficulty in proving, at least, to their own satisfaction. It was then, when the intellect of Europe was comparatively dormant, that several master-minds arose ; enlightened by the Spirit of God, they saw through the surrounding evil ; emancipating themselves from a state of thralldom and corruption, they leavened much of the mass of society with their own principles ; and while they purified the church, they prevented it from passing to the opposite extreme of lawlessness and insubordination.

More than two centuries later, a very different spectacle was exhibited in revolutionary France : during the intervening period, the principle of freedom of inquiry, which arose at the Reformation, had communicated itself to that kingdom, and, at an early stage, a portion of the people had thrown off the Romish yoke, but the greater number continued attached to the

Church of Rome. Their minds, however, being in a state of great activity, both in science and politics, they, when led to investigate the claims of Christianity, were unable to admit them in the only form in which it was presented to the great majority of the nation, and, by one bold measure, they declared the whole to be a fiction, and rejected Revelation altogether.

In Germany again, the cradle of the Reformation, a very different course was pursued. A host of writers appeared in the 16th century, who, being exposed to severe sufferings for the truths they taught, partook deeply of the genuine spirit of Christianity, and were thus enabled to perceive the meaning of the inspired penmen, and to speak with authority to the consciences of men. The primitive Christians, in contending with Pagans, appealed to the broad features and fundamental principles of Christianity. On the other hand, the Reformers were involved in endless controversies within the church, and were occupied in determining what was truth among the conflicting opinions of opposite parties. Such a position was a perilous one for a church to hold, in so far as vital godliness was concerned : occupied with minute points of difference, they were apt to forget the weightier matters of the law ; and being daily called upon to fight for the truth, they were in danger of fostering the

spirit of contention rather than love. That generation passed away, and was succeeded by one that was distinguished for the same disputations about the orthodoxy of their abstract creed, but not for the same attainments in spiritual vigour : the Church, accordingly, made an idol of the letter of Scripture, in many instances drew unwarrantable inferences from insulated passages,* introduced a forced system of interpretation, and thereby paved the way for rejecting the idea of its inspiration, and bringing it down to the level of a mere human composition.

The Reformation gave an impulse to the German mind, which it has never lost ; their speculations on this, as on all other subjects, partake of a degree of boldness not to be met with in any other nation. France discarded the Scriptures altogether ; the Germans, on the other hand, continued to study them, but denied that there was any thing supernatural in their composition, and maintained, wherever miracles are related, that they could be explained by natural causes. This is what has been long known under the name of Rationalism. It is generally admitted that such opinions have been long and widely prevalent

* For examples of these, see Pusey's learned Historical Inquiry into the causes of the Rationalist Character, lately predominant in the Theology of Germany. Part II. pp. 55, 56.

among the theologians of Germany, but not, as some would maintain, universal. Here, as elsewhere, God has never left himself without a witness : there never have been wanting defenders of the truth equal in learning to their opponents, though inferior in numbers : they have in this, as in many previous portions of the history of the Church, been a little flock ; but it is to this very circumstance we are indebted for many an able defence of the truth, that would otherwise never have existed. It was the attacks of the heathen philosophers that led to the composition of the ablest Apologies for Christianity in the primitive ages : it was the erroneous view of the Church of Rome on the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith alone, that led Luther to set forth this precious truth in all its fulness. In like manner, the objections of infidels in Great Britain to Christianity have given rise to many of the best defences which the Church possesses.

The same analogy holds in German Rationalism. Tossed amid a sea of perplexities, many were compelled to turn inwardly on their own spirits ; and finding how exactly Christianity was suited to their fallen nature, they hailed it as the gift of God, and thus were enabled to stand firm upon a rock from which no sophistry could dislodge them.

God has been pleased to reveal himself in a great variety of forms,—in creation, in providence, in his written word, in miracles, and frequently to the minds of men directly. The mode of manifestation is in these cases different; the result is the same. The man who listens to a voice proceeding from one of these sources, will doubtless know some portion of truth; he who is favoured with more, or with all of them, will know it in greater fulness. It is thus that while there may be much speculative error in some one department, God's voice may be heard through some other channel, and preserve the mind from total ignorance of himself.

The following extract from a work by Drechster, published at Leipsic in 1837, will shew the justice of these remarks:—

“It has pleased God to suffer the kingdom of darkness to reveal itself in all forms and degrees, but at the same time to follow it step by step, and always to oppose and conquer it. In our day, it is under the form of knowledge that the kingdom of error and wickedness contends against the light. It is therefore the armour of knowledge by which that dark undertaking must be exhibited in its utter worthlessness. We are apt to cultivate the field on which we are placed, not lightly and superficially, but with

probity and earnestness. Were we then to give to the world discussions which we do not, in our inmost conscience, consider as true and satisfactory, we should not be faithful householders of our Lord. That our Lord himself triumphs is his own care, for which He will best provide. That we be found true, *let that be our care.*"

The same writer afterwards observes, that the inquiries and labours of the Rationalists are nothing but the onward movement of a prejudice against miracles and prophecy, which is the basis of their procedure, and has for some time past usurped the name of criticism. Of the effects of this prejudice, in leading to absurd interpretations of Scripture utterly inconsistent in themselves, he gives several striking illustrations from the works of his countrymen.

In the Rev. Hugh Rose's very able account of "the State of Protestantism in Germany," there are several remarks confirmatory of the views just stated. That learned author observes, "Latterly a more healthy spirit of religion has grown up in Germany. The reign of that voluptuous mysticism which expended itself in the mere passive indulgence of the affections is passing away, and a true and genuine Christianity is, I trust, beginning to take root in Germany, which, although, like the mystical system, it addresses itself

to the affections and feelings, does not stop there, but seeks to confirm and establish the dominion of vital and practical religion by an intimate knowledge of the system of the Gospel, and a bold and unhesitating assertion of the truths it proclaims..... We may discern everywhere strong marks of improvement. In the first place, I would mention the different and improved character of the theological works which have latterly appeared,—a fact well known to all readers of German divinity. Nor is there a less favourable change in other quarters. The aspect of science and of historical inquiry, is no longer hostile but friendly to Christianity. I believe, indeed, that there is scarce an University in Germany which has not one, or more, professors of really Christian views. But one of the most direct, though perhaps at first sight not very cogent proofs of improvement, is the fact that the orthodox party are so far advanced in strength, that they have recently established more than one Journal on their own principles.

“There is likewise, in one respect, a great improvement in the philological labours of even the Rationalist divines. I cannot indeed say that they are become Christians, but some of them are become, what they were not before, scholars.....Some, I trust, though still in intellectual error, have feelingly perceived that

their path was not the path of peace for themselves, or of godliness for their people: some are ashamed of their absurdities: some find that the assertion of their opinions does not obtain the same applause which it did a few years ago: and finally, some find that the hand of power is against them."

There cannot be a stronger proof that a better state of things has commenced in some parts of Germany, than the fact, that in 1828 the Synod of Elberfeld deposed a pastor from his office for denying the doctrines of Original Sin and the Atonement. But it may be asked, in what way has this been brought about? to which we reply, that the very magnitude of the evil has itself led to the cure. It was the rejection of the external evidence of Christianity that led the Germans to examine more narrowly its internal character and its sanctifying influence; a department of investigation to which the German mind is peculiarly adapted. It is to this, doubtless, that many of their writings are indebted for that spirit of deep piety that is so completely interwoven with them; and, as has been forcibly observed by a Reviewer of Jung Stilling, * "we state it as a notorious fact, of which no student of German literature can be ignorant, that

* Foreign Quart. Rev. July, 1838.

there is infinitely more of a deep, earnest, searching spirit of true piety in that literature than in our own ; that though it may sometimes be difficult to state in so many words wherein the exact creed of each German man consists, still his piety is there, feeling and felt, colouring, interpenetrating, informing all things ; you cannot touch it, but you feel sensibly that there is a soul present, that you are not far from the influence of God and good things."

These remarks may be applied with great truth to many religious publications, besides biographies, which have been lately translated from the German. Where, however, there is such a conflict between truth and error, between intellectual light and darkness, as in Germany, and especially where the imagination is allowed such free scope, and many are able to clothe their speculations in such glowing and captivating imagery, it is impossible to watch with too jealous an eye every professedly religious work which comes from such a quarter. It cannot be expected that every individual, in searching after a system of truth for himself, should at first discover what has been the creed of the church from the earliest ages. In soaring to the great Fountain of light, he will doubtless frequently deviate from the straight course, and follow some earthly meteor, and not improbably lead others

astray after him. The danger is, lest men imagine that because an author is orthodox in his views of one truth, and has been an able expositor of it, that therefore his opinion may be adopted in others: but as no one can take the conscience of another for his own guide, nor walk in the light of another, so must he, in the consideration of every article of faith, bring it to the bar of Scripture, and there, as in the sight of God, judge of it for himself. In like manner, to judge correctly of any work, the same course must be adopted; each must stand or fall by its own merits; and, however much the name of an author, who has written according to what is regarded as orthodox views on some single point, may afford presumptive evidence that he has done so on another, it cannot be taken as an infallible guide, and least of all in German theology.

In the writings of Dr. F. A. Krummacher, there are everywhere traces of a creed in exact conformity with that of the Reformed Church of the British Empire, on all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; and, what is of equal importance, there is also the indication of a soul imbued with vital godliness, and a mind richly endowed with spiritual discernment. It is this which enables him, in "Cornelius the Centurion," and in his "Life and Character of St. John

the Evangelist and Apostle," to pourtray in vivid colours the peculiar character of each. No man can accurately describe the character of another, and trace it in his life, unless in some measure his own resemble it. The Author of these works is evidently possessed of the singleness of eye, and of the desire for truth, which characterised the Gentile centurion, and of much of the simplicity and love for which St. John was distinguished. Such, indeed, is the reputation he bears in his own country, and this is fully evidenced by his writings.

In following the progress of the mind of Cornelius through all its windings, until blessed with the full blaze of Christian light, he has presented an invaluable gift to the Church. A truth stated abstractly, is an idea of what may be; the same exhibited in the life, is the reality of what hath been,—a thing which human nature has performed, and which human nature may perform again. The one is the seed of godliness, which has yet to stand the proof of the world's ungenial climate; the other is the harvest which has stood all weathers, and proved the capacities of the soil. And when any frail mortal has been enabled, by the light of God's word and his Holy Spirit, to witness a good confession for truth, and, in the midst of trial and difficulty, to maintain his fidelity to Him, he has

presented the most acceptable offering to the Author of his being, and one which the world should ever keep in remembrance. It is on this principle that the Episcopal Church, in her Liturgy, directs the attention of her members on the various Saints' Days, to those graces for which they were distinguished, as what may and ought still to be attained by those who follow in their footsteps; and in her Communion Service, "blesses God's holy name for all his servants who have departed this life in his faith and fear; beseeching Him to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom." The church gives God thanks for these, as being victories gained over the powers of evil, as trophies reared in the land of a common enemy, and as examples held up for present imitation.

In Cornelius we behold a man placed in the most unfavourable circumstances in human estimation, obtaining a faint glimmering of divine light, and acting so faithfully in following wherever it directed him, that he is at length honoured by God to be an Abraham among the Gentiles. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether

it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John vii. 17. Krummacher has a very clear perception of the character of God, as a God of light and of knowledge, and as desiring to impart it to his creatures, so that he may cease to be an unknown God ; at the same time he is deeply impressed with the responsibility of man in using the means God has put within his reach, as implied in the passages just quoted ; his favourite illustration on this point, both in the case of St. John and of Cornelius, is that of a seed of corn deposited in the ground, which, although it has within it a living principle and is acted upon by the solar heat and the rain from heaven, still requires the culture of man to make it bring forth fruit. He states very forcibly how valueless is a mere barren conviction or speculative notion of the truth of Christianity, where that is not accompanied with a corresponding practice ; and traces, with much clearness, to its true source, the Rationalism of some of his countrymen, as the following extracts will show :

“ * We must on no account compare the doubting and deliberating Apostle with those Rationalists who, blinded by pride and selfishness, oppose human wisdom to divine revelation, as if they were of equal

* Cornelius the Centurion, p. 43.

authority ; while their true reason is an unwillingness to obey the commands of God, and embrace the only belief which unravels the stupendous mystery of the human mind..... * Sinful man is by nature inclined to worship the understanding, which certainly is an error quite as bad as the idolatry which seeks to confine the Lord, who fills heaven and earth, to a temple made with hands, or an image made of iron or marble. This worship of the understanding seeks to limit the power of the living God by the laws which govern nature, and by the ordinary course of history and events ; thus lowering the glory of the unchangeable God to the level of a thing created by their own imaginations. The first describes the method of the infidel worldly wisdom of our own era," &c.

He evidently considers here, that Rationalism has its root in the *will*, not in the *intellect* ; and that the only cure for it is, that a man should be made willing to be taught of God ;—and, as he observes with much truth,† “ Why should we, in the foolish manner of men, place *in opposition to each other* those words, but imperfectly understood, natural and supernatural ? They both mean the same thing in the kingdom of God,—that

* Cornelius, p. 170.

† P. 46.

He from whom, to whom, and by whom, all things are, sends rain and snow as well as the word which issues forth out of his mouth, makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flaming fire ; and transforms fiery flames into his servants, and storms into his messengers." Nothing could be more explicit for vindicating him from any tendency to Rationalism, or to reject any manifestation of the power of God, merely because he could not comprehend how it was effected.

On the essential doctrines of the corruption of human nature, the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the love of God to man lost and ruined, the forgiveness of sin through the atoning blood of Christ alone, and the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, his views are perfectly orthodox. "This revelation of three persons in one God," as he beautifully observes, "comprehends the whole of Christian doctrine, and is both the foundation and the distinguishing characteristic of our faith. The three divine names, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make known to us the whole history of God among the children of men ; they comprehend the mighty deeds and manifestations of the love of God, which He decreed from the beginning for our salvation ; which He has begun in time, but which shall be accomplished in eternity." He speaks

here, and elsewhere, of this doctrine of the divine nature in connection with corresponding blessings in redemption,—a circumstance which makes a great and important difference between the Scriptural statements of the Trinity, and those frequently found among human writers, who rather represent it as an abstract subject for discussion, than a delightful and edifying truth, which contains all that is dear to the heart of a sinner in the revelation of mercy, and without which indeed Christianity becomes but an empty name. From the manner in which the various truths are stated by him in these works, it is evident that they have become the source of divine life to his own soul; from a conviction of their tendency to promote the same in others, and with the humble hope and prayer that they may thus be blessed by the great Head of the church, they are now submitted in their present form to the public.

DEDICATION.

I WRITE this little Book for you, beloved Christians, whom I, during six-and-twenty years in Kettwig, Bernburg, and Bremen, led to the table of our Lord and Saviour. I dedicate it to you, to remind you of the time when we beheld each other face to face, when we prayed together, and sought with one accord to establish our faith on the eternal Word of Truth; trusting that it may remind you of that holy covenant to which we belong, and which, I earnestly hope, when earthly things have passed away, may unite us all in heaven above.

That God may grant this both to you and me, is the prayer of your fondly attached pastor,

F. A. KRUMMACHER.

LIFE OF ST. JOHN.

JOHN'S FORM AND APPEARANCE.

No biography could have been more interesting than a minute history of John the Evangelist and Apostle, from his childhood until his death. We are anxious to hear particulars concerning his youthful years, his behaviour towards his parents and under the paternal roof, his outward deportment, character, and appearance. This, however, has neither been given us by himself, nor by the other Evangelists. They have not even described to us the human form of their Lord and Master, the fairest among the children of men. If it is asked, wherefore? I should answer, Of themselves they spoke nothing, because they thought nothing of themselves; and they were silent concerning their Lord's outward appearance, out of reverence for that glory which they were deemed worthy of beholding. Have we not enough, when we see the splendour of the sun when he goes forth as

a bridegroom from his chamber, and as a strong man to run a race,—or do we require more? The Evangelists do not write a worldly history, confined within the mere bounds of outward circumstances.

For this reason we cannot have a true representation of the Apostle John: although painters have often delineated, and sculptors moulded his form, they must all have been far from the truth, as they had no other guide than the peculiar bent of their own character and imagination. Whatever we particularly admire and love, our soul imperceptibly blends with all the creations of our genius.

We can, however, form a picture of the Apostle in our minds, if we observe him wherever he appears in the Gospel; but particularly if we study those writings which he himself has left behind. We can recognise the singing bird everywhere by its beautiful tones. The picture which is taken from occasional glimpses and detached circumstances, must certainly be imperfect, and far from comprehending the whole character of the holy Apostle. Nevertheless, a single glance, a single word, or action of such a man, is a testimony of his internal life; for the purer the heart's simplicity, the more do trifles express what is passing within it. And in all cases, the representation, imperfect though it be, of that which stands high above us, tends both to humiliate and exalt us.

Our Apostle also has his history. He, like other men, did not become what he was instantaneously; but by degrees, in the society of his Lord and Master, and afterwards by the assistance of his Holy Spirit,

he came to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He walked in the same path which is appointed for us, the path of contrition and self-denial, and fought the same fight of faith and patience.

The holy Apostle John thus stands before us, showing us an example how to imitate the Lord Jesus, and seems to say in the words of Paul, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of peace shall be with you." Philip. iv. 9.

JOHN'S CHILDHOOD.

The gospel history has told us little of the childhood and domestic character of John. This is the custom of the Evangelists—what is merely human they generally pass over, if it does not stand in intimate connection with the kingdom of God. Their biographies seldom begin with the natural birth of the individual, unless where it has been glorified by peculiar and divine manifestations ; on the contrary, they generally commence with his regeneration.

We do not even know with certainty where John was born, and can only conjecture, with some appearance of probability, that it was in the little town of Bethsaida, situated in Galilee, on the banks of the sea of Gennesareth ; the birth-place also of Peter, Andrew,

and Philip. Who would have thought, that out of this unimportant fishing-town, so many and such distinguished men of God should arise? But in the kingdom of God, every thing, like the work of redemption itself, begins obscurely and insignificantly, and may be compared to the seed of corn resting in the dark bosom of the earth.

The father of John was called Zebedee, and his mother Salome. Of the former we know little more than the name, and that he was a fisherman in the lake of Gennesareth, or sea of Galilee. The latter, Salome, was one of the women who afterwards accompanied Jesus during his wanderings, and ministered to him and his disciples. The parents of John were not poor, for they earned enough by the labour of their hands to supply their necessities. Zebedee had men to assist him in his occupation; and John possessed a house in Jerusalem, in which he received the mother of Jesus, when our Lord on the cross recommended her to his care. John was not the only son; there was another, named James, who afterwards became an Apostle of the Lord, and ten years after his Master's ascension, at the instigation of the Jews, was beheaded with the sword by king Agrippa. Happy parents, to whom God had given two such sons! Their youngest was named John. The Israelitish nation, as the people from whom the Saviour of the world was to proceed, were always looking joyfully towards the future; and on this account attached great importance to the names which their children received. No nation of the ancient world regarded the blessing of

children so much as the Jews ; and none valued, like them, a numerous posterity, as the best gift God could bestow. In the 128th Psalm, amongst the blessings promised to him that feareth the Lord and walketh in his ways, it is said that his children shall be like olive plants round about his table, and that he shall see his children's children. The ground of this lay in the mysterious hope of that joyful future, to be brought about by one of the descendants of Abraham, of whom all the prophets had prophesied. The Israelites were most peculiarly an expectant people ; and as they were at present sighing under the law, the birth of a child reminded them of the blessed future, and was a joyful circumstance closely linked with the hope of a new and a better time. Eve had that idea ; for, when her first-born son came into the world, she believed that he was the Saviour, and on that account named him Cain, that is to say, " the desired one."

The pious parents of John did not fail to look up to God in faith and hope, when they gave their child his name ; and in doing so, were no doubt influenced by the Holy Spirit. They called him John, that is to say, " blessed, or favoured by God ;" and this name beautifully expresses the character and life of the Apostle, as well as his relation to his God and Master, for he was the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Of his youthful life, we know nothing more than that he was brought up under the eyes of his parents, in a simple and pious fisherman's family, far removed from the luxury and corruption of the capital. His father destined him to the same occupation by which

he supported himself and his household ; for he seems to have rented, along with others, the fishery on the sea of Gennesareth. Both parents belonged to that class who, like Simeon, waited for the Anointed of the Lord and the consolation of Israel ; and it is certain, that Salome, like the mother and grandmother of Timotheus, instructed her son from his childhood in the Holy Scriptures. As a mother speaks the first words to her child, first draws out his affections, and first teaches him human speech ; so it is her duty, also, to sow the first imperishable seed of the divine word in his heart. O what a blessing can such a mother extend even to her most distant posterity, who, as Peter writes, being endued with “ the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,” early directs the waters of the word of life into the soft heart of her child, and instructs him in the way of salvation ! Thus the mother’s blessing provides for her children houses, not merely upon earth, but a house of God, eternal in the heavens. John, whom the Lord loved, had such a mother. And the only book which was read in Israel, out of which pious women instructed their children, and to which all the valleys and mountains of the holy land bore testimony, was—the Book of books, the book of the covenant and the promises.

JOHN'S YOUTH.

We are unable to describe particularly the youthful years of our Apostle, for the Evangelists have related but few circumstances concerning them. Like David, he was probably of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon ; and, without doubt, he was modest and gentle, earnest, contemplative, and of a generous disposition.

He pursued the same occupation as his father, that of fishing ; for it is possible to serve God in every labour and calling, and no rank is so low that men ought to despise it. The bee is one of the least of winged creatures, and yet its labours produce the sweetest fruit. Each useful employment is ordained by God, and none is incompatible with the highest of all, which is seeking after the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Yet some occupations conduce more than others to serious contemplation on the aim and destination of human life,—on time and on eternity ; for this, the employment of a fisherman seems particularly suitable.

We must now endeavour to depict to our minds John, as a fisherman upon the Galilean sea. The fishery was generally carried on during the night ; and how often must he in lonely silence have gazed upon the midnight sea, bounded on all sides by picturesque mountains ! Above him, the blue eastern sky with

its sparkling host of stars ; under him, the clear watery mirror, in which the starry heaven appeared at his feet, the glittering constellations seemed to tremble on the moving billows, and the near though dusky mountain ridges were reflected in its bosom. Around him the deepest silence, only interrupted by the noise of the rudder and the rippling of those waters, which, at times agitated by the wind, roared louder than the storm ;—an emblem of the vicissitudes of human life.

Would not the nights, passed in this manner, raise the soul of the highly gifted youth to the most exalted thoughts and feelings, hopes and wishes ?—but particularly during that important time when all the faithful in Judea, and indeed the whole people, awaited the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets, and the advent of the promised heavenly King and Saviour ?

John the Baptist had now appeared, in the form of Elias, on the banks of the Jordan ; and the fame of him resounded through the whole land, as the preacher of repentance, who chastised the sins of the people, and announced the near approach of the kingdom of God. The name of the Baptist, the same as his own, would probably touch the heart of the youth. Might not, also, the fame of that which had been done in Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, have penetrated even into Galilee and Bethsaida, and opened the hearts of those who had understanding to behold the twilight or dawn of a new day ? Must not John have imparted his holy feelings and hopes to his brother James, his friends Simon and Andrew, the sons of

Jonas, and to the other youths who were his companions? And, in the quiet circle of pious household life, would not the subject of conversation often be the consolation of Israel, and the precious promises of the divine word?

Nothing is unimportant in the youthful life of any man, but particularly in that of one like John, whom the Lord had chosen for such a high destiny. Let us remember, for example, that coat of many colours which Jacob presented to his beloved Joseph, which exercised such an influence on his future career; and also the life which David, the shepherd boy, passed amidst his flocks, when he played upon his harp, and overcame bears and lions.

The occupation of a shepherd shines with splendour from the writings of the prophet Amos, who in his youth was a herdsman; and the circumstance that Martin Luther's father was a miner, had probably a powerful influence on his temper, spirit, and character. The birds of the air, and the flowers of the field, the gentle dove, and the wise serpent, all minister to our instruction in that school wherein we are placed; and why should not the sea also, that mirror of the starry heavens, do the same?

JOHN WITH THE BAPTIST.

Now that the light had dawned in the soul of John, he could no longer remain in Bethsaida. He left his father's dwelling, his ship, and his nets, and betook himself to the river Jordan, where his namesake was preaching and baptizing. The desire to attain that kingdom of heaven, whose near approach the Baptist was announcing, had grown stronger than ever in his soul, and now urged him onwards. He therefore joined himself to this new Elias, and became his disciple. Our history is silent, however, with regard to the manner in which this took place, and the time during which he remained with him. The smaller light fades and becomes imperceptible in the splendour of the greater, as the morning star grows dim when the sun arises.

John thus describes the Baptist in the first pages of his Gospel. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John i. 6, 7, 8, 9. Wherever the Baptist is mentioned in the Gospel of John, it is done in such a manner that one can perceive how highly the Apostle esteemed and loved his first master. We see that he

was connected with Jesus in the most intimate manner, though yielding and giving place to him in deep humility. "I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose," is the sum and substance of the testimony which John bore to our Lord. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." The Apostle John repeats this as the Baptist's own words ; and by thus depicting the joyful character of his first master's humility, it is evident that he both loved him as a teacher, and knew his heart intimately. It is a testimony that the two Johns were friends and confidants ; for love only has those clear-sighted eyes which can discern the secret character of the beloved object.

JOHN WITH JESUS.

After John the Baptist had baptized Jesus in the waters of the Jordan, and had acknowledged him to be the only Son of the Father, from seeing the Spirit descend upon him like a dove ; he continued to preach him as the greatest of all, the Messiah and the Son of God,

the light and Saviour of the world. With mighty power and joy, though in deep humility, he spoke from day to day of Jesus the Christ, and referred his disciples to Him, as the great and the only Saviour.

It happened one day that Jesus passed by while John was baptizing and preaching repentance at Bethabara on the Jordan, and when his two disciples, John, and Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, were standing by his side and listening to his words. The Baptist, looking upon Jesus as he walked, saith, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" What must have been the feelings of the two youths, when those mysterious words were uttered, when they beheld the promised Saviour face to face! Our Apostle adds, "And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." They did so with reverential awe; for they desired, like Zaccheus afterwards, to behold the face of one, of whom they had heard from their teacher such great and glorious things. The two humble and youthful disciples must have regarded the Lord Jesus with still more veneration, because their master had called him greater than himself, and told them he was unworthy even to unloose the latchet of His shoes.

They, therefore, followed him with reverence and awe. But, lo! "Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, what seek ye?" Was the question strange? Oh, no. It was an answer to that which was passing in their hearts, but which they had not ventured to utter. "They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where

dwellest thou ?” His reply is but a proof of their childish confusion and timidity.

According to Jewish reckoning, it was about the tenth hour, that is with us, four in the afternoon ; so the day was beginning to decline. The modesty of the two youths would not permit them to rob our Lord of the remaining part of the day ; and their question, “ Where dwellest thou ?” might be interpreted, “ Is it lawful for us to accompany thee to thy abode ?” or else, “ We desire to speak with thee—do thou appoint the time and place where we may visit thee.” How beautiful and appropriate is modesty to the young ! Where this flower is wanting, there can be no good soil.

The Lord Jesus saith unto them, “ Come and see. Come to my habitation—accompany me now.” They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with Him that day.

What benignant kindness on the part of Jesus ! He knew well what they sought,—He penetrated their hearts, and saw what was in them. Therefore, he turned and spoke with them, took them with him, and entertained them many hours before He let them go. And what was the fruit of all this ? A new life began in the two disciples, the morning star arose in their breasts, and they expressed it in the simple words, “ We have found the Messias !”

Let us now look back once more to the early life of John. His own words are, “ *We have found the Messias !*” Truly the Apostle had been all along searching for Him, though without being aware of it. And

why was this? Was he not satisfied with the distinguished teacher sent from God, of whom our Lord himself said that he was greater than the prophets who had come before him? No. The Baptist could not, and ought not to satisfy his soul. He was only, as he himself confessed, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, the servant and forerunner of Him who should come, whose path he was commanded to prepare. In his own person he represented Moses and the prophets; and that salvation which John sought could not come from them, but only from Him of whom all the prophets did testify.

But "no man can come unto Him, except the Father draw him." John had been from infancy a child of grace; for Jesus had loved him, even before he beheld him. Our Lord's training and discipline were silent and gentle, like the beloved disciple's own character. The imperishable seed of truth had unfolded itself by degrees under the eyes of his pious parents, as well as in the solitude and simplicity of the fisherman's life. Even the silent nights passed on the sea of Gennesareth, when his heart, moved by admiration of the works of nature, adored their God—all would tend to turn his mind inwards on himself, and prompt him to solve each inexplicable mystery by the study of the Holy Scriptures.

As soon as he heard of the second and long-promised Elias, who had announced the descent of the Christ from heaven, and the approach of the kingdom of God, he left his father's house, and became a disciple of the holy man. But the Baptist, as stand-

ing on the boundary between the old and new covenants, chastised the sins of the people, and preached the law and repentance; for his baptism signified merely the death of the old man, and not the resurrection of the new; it was not regeneration, or "the answer of a good conscience towards God." "This new life," said the Baptist, "I cannot give you; I only baptize with water, but He that cometh after me, and is greater than I, He shall baptize you with fire, and with the Holy Spirit."

Our Apostle had also been baptized with this baptism of repentance; but he had not found in it that peace which he sought. The law and repentance, the Baptist and his baptism, could not impart it; for He alone can give it who is called "Wonderful" and "the Prince of Peace."

And, lo! He to whom John had referred his disciples, and to whom he bore testimony as the Anointed of God, and the light of the world—He had appeared, and a voice from Heaven had declared him to be the Son of God; and the two young men, Andrew and John, sought Him and found Him.

"What seek ye?" are the words with which Jesus accosted them. He that had come to look for those sheep which were lost, knew better than they did themselves that which they sought. All men are seeking; they seek the lost Eden, that is to say, the salvation and peace of God, the good and perfect gifts which come down from above. Few, however, clearly understand what they seek, and what they have lost; and the number is still smaller, of those who seek

where they ought. Instead of turning towards the Creator and fountain of all salvation, they lower themselves to his creatures. Some, notwithstanding their own corrupt nature, seek for salvation in themselves, as if they by their own power, will and understanding, could perfect and create themselves anew ; others seek for it in the acquisition, possession, and enjoyment of the perishable wealth and pleasures of this world ; others in fame, honour, and the approbation of men.

They all find themselves in error and delusion ; for they resemble the thirsty wanderers in the deserts of Arabia, who fancy they espy water in the distance ; eagerly they hasten towards it, but they soon become aware of their error ; for what they imagined a clear streamlet, proves to be only the glitter of the sunbeams on the glowing sand. The search after peace and happiness in the world and its pleasure, is but a species of idolatry, which never can obtain the kingdom of heaven.

David describes the true search, in the most powerful language, in the 42d Psalm. “ As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ? ” Or, in other words, “ When shall I see his face ? ” Jesus, the only Son of the Father, who, as the Son of man, dwelt among us full of grace and truth, may be described as the face of God turned towards man. It is only in Him, and through Him, that we can see God, and become partakers of that peace which endureth for ever.

David and the pious fathers of the old covenant longed for this ; and Simeon and Hanna praised God in the temple at Jerusalem, because their desire had been fulfilled. This desire, also, was fulfilled in the hearts of the disciples. “ If any man thirst,” saith our Lord, “ let him come unto me, and drink.” Then were the words of the holy Psalmist realized, “ Your heart shall live that seek God.”

JOHN CALLED TO BE A DISCIPLE OF THE LORD.

We are all desirous of knowing what Jesus said to the two disciples, during those evening hours spent in confidential intercourse. John most probably repeated it to his parents, but he has said nothing of it in his Gospel. He wrote the latter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, at a late period of his life, and after he had known and beheld the glory of Jesus, as the only Son of the Father. This glory he has faithfully depicted in his Gospel ; and why should he not also have described the beginning, or, in other words, the infancy of his knowledge, faith, and love towards his Master ? The Gospel of John, however, has this peculiarity, that his name and person are invariably concealed, whenever it is possible to do so. Perhaps, also, after he became a man, he might, like the Apostle Paul, consider his first search after truth among the thoughts and incidents of his childhood.

On the part of Jesus, the first conversation with the two disciples was, without doubt, full of the same condescending grace and love which He always manifested to those who sought Him. The fruit of this personal acquaintance with our Lord was, that they both joyfully exclaimed, "We have found the Messiah!" And the new disciples, namely, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, joined the followers of Jesus.

Did our Lord, at this first meeting, take John and Andrew from henceforth into the number of his disciples? No. He permitted them to depart, after they had remained one night with Him. This was most peculiarly the custom of Jesus. He would not open the fruit until it was ripened: it was enough that the imperishable seed of truth had been sown in their hearts, and He now awaited its development. He acted in the same manner with Nicodemus, that Pharisee full of his own wisdom—with the rich young man, who imagined he had fulfilled the whole of the law—in short, with all who came asking Him questions. In the heart of Nicodemus the word of truth, which our Lord had sown, did not penetrate the hard soil until Jesus had expired on the cross,—and in many others it first became quickened on the day of Pentecost, when the gospel was preached by the Apostles.

Thus our Lord did not wish that John should separate himself from the Baptist, although the latter declared Jesus to be greater than he, and referred his followers to Him. In this, the Son of man did not act like those human teachers who wish to see the fruit immediately after it is sown; but, according to His

own comparison, He desired first the blade, then the stalk, and afterwards the full ear. He did not seek His own glory, but the glory of His Father, and the salvation of those who believed on Him.

Months elapsed probably between John's first conversation with Jesus, and his being enrolled in the number of his disciples. After Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, our Lord left Bethabara and went to Galilee, where he was present at the marriage in Cana, and there manifested his glory by the performance of his first miracle. Thence He travelled by way of Capernaum towards Nazareth, the place where He had lived, in silence and obscurity, from his twelfth until his thirteenth year; but from this place he was driven out by its inhabitants. He then went to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the passover, and it was at this time He cast the money-changers out of the temple, and had the interview with Nicodemus by night. He afterwards returned through Samaria and Galilee. Several disciples who had acknowledged the Lord as the Messiah, accompanied him on this his first journey. History is silent on the subject, yet John probably belonged to this number; and thus had an opportunity of becoming more and more acquainted with the character and the glory of his Master, although, properly speaking, he was not as yet one of those disciples who had received a peculiar call.

This call to be a disciple, and at the same time to the future office of Apostle, did not take place until

John the Baptist had been thrown into prison by Herod, at the instigation of his wife Herodias. Matthew relates the circumstances in the fourth chapter of his Gospel. Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee saw two brethren, Simon Peter and Andrew, casting a net; as they had toiled all night and taken nothing, He commanded them to cast their nets once more into the sea. They did so, and inclosed such a multitude of fishes that their net brake. "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke v. 8. Jesus now chose the two brothers to be his disciples, addressing them in the words, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Our Lord now came to another part of the sea, where Zebedee and his two sons, John and James, were in a ship mending their nets. He called to them also, and they immediately left their father in the ship, and followed Him. They continued henceforth to be his disciples, and afterwards became his Apostles and his witnesses over the whole earth.

The disciples chosen first by our Lord were fishermen,—of the simplest habits of life,—and employed in a trade which is one of the natural occupations of uncivilized man. The words of Jesus are symbolical;—from henceforward they were to cast their nets into the great sea of the world, struggle with the stormy waves, and catch men for the kingdom of God. The choice of the Lord was simple, like his own words; and equally simple were the hearts of those who were chosen. Truth and sublimity lie in simplicity; and

thus began the greatest and most blessed work of God, for the salvation of the world.

We must now look back once more to the first acquaintance of our Apostle with the Lord Jesus, and to the commencement of his spiritual discipleship. This may be dated from the time when the Baptist, seeing Jesus coming to him, uttered the words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Great and mighty, wonderful and mysterious sentence!

Were John and Andrew able to understand it? Yes, they understood it, that is to say, in their hearts they felt and acknowledged its height and depth, its consolation and blessing,—in the same manner as a childish, though pious mind, feels and comprehends the words, "Love, Heaven and Happiness," perhaps almost without the aid of reason. Thus the two youths understood, or we should rather say, felt the importance and the blessed signification of the Baptist's words. Their minds also had been prepared for it by his preaching. "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Repentance is the earnest acknowledgment and deep conviction of the sinfulness and unworthiness of man in the presence of a holy and just God; and this was the substance of his preaching,—this was the voice in the wilderness. In this path only, the path of self-knowledge, sorrow for sin, contrition, and desire of salvation, can man attain the blessed fellowship of his Redeemer. For this reason Jesus himself, as well as his Apostles, invariably began their preaching by exhorting mankind to repentance.

John also must walk in this path ; from his youth upwards he had been instructed in it by his pious parents, who waited for the consolation of Israel. For this reason he did not require the same mode of treatment as Peter and Nathanael, and still less the same as the self-righteous Nicodemus, and the rich young man, proud of his virtue and fond of this world ; nor yet that which was experienced by the pharisaical and haughty Paul. Nevertheless, the plough must pass through his soul in order to bring to light the roots of the weeds ; for it is only by this means they can be extirpated. The Baptist was to the Apostle that living law, that burning and shining light, which, consuming all that is selfish, illuminated his inmost soul. The first of Apostolic epistles, written at a more advanced age, corroborates this idea ; for he declares the knowledge and confession of our sins to be the first condition of our entrance into the kingdom of God. “ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” Thus far, and no farther, could John the Baptist lead him,—to poverty of spirit, grief for his sins, and hunger and thirst after righteousness.

When he had guided him so far on his path—at the proper hour Jesus passed by, when the Baptist exclaimed, “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !”—that taketh away thy sin ! These were the most glorious and the most consol-

ing words which our Apostle had ever heard from the mouth of the great preacher of repentance. When they were uttered, John probably remembered the prediction of the prophet, which describes the great Shepherd of the human race as the lamb to be offered up a sacrifice for their sins.

Thus his path was opened, the course of his life was decided ; he found what he sought, and publicly acknowledged what he believed. John as the Apostle, was but the completion of that work which the Baptist had begun.

THE DISCIPLES.

After John had beheld the Lord, and heard his voice, he became his disciple, and a sheep in his fold. The word disciple is a beautiful word ; it signifies nearly the same as scholar or pupil, but it has also a tender and a more comprehensive meaning ;—it implies a spiritual and almost a childish connection. As a child grows, and gradually unfolds into manhood under the eyes and guardianship of his parents, so also did the disciples of Jesus. When he said, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” he stepped at once into the relation of their parents, in order to lead them towards the kingdom of heaven. As every development takes place by degrees in visible

nature ; and as the earth itself, being at first without form and void, was gradually prepared by the Creator for the residence of man,—so Jesus in the same manner prepared his disciples for the kingdom of heaven.

A disciple, however, was not an apostle ; and even in discipleship there were various grades. Sometimes those are called disciples who, without being expressly called by our Lord, accompanied Him in his wanderings ; who heard his words, and saw his miracles, though without believing on Him as the Anointed of God ; and who, after a time, as is mentioned in John vi. 66, “ went back and walked no more with Him.” Others, on the contrary, more and more openly acknowledged that he possessed the words of eternal life ; they joined themselves to Him more closely, and were the same as his chosen disciples, to whom He, their benevolent Master, manifested his glory by word and deed, sign and miracle.

Our Lord afterwards separated seventy from the rest of his disciples, who should go before Him, two by two, to the towns and villages, in order to prepare the inhabitants to receive his doctrine, and perhaps also, to exercise themselves in the preaching of the gospel. These were named “the seventy,” to distinguish them from the others. The family of Jacob consisted of seventy souls, when they took up their abode in Egypt ; seventy elders were appointed, by God’s command, to assist Moses in the arduous duties of his office ; and seventy men formed, along with the high priest, the supreme council in Jerusalem. It was a

consecrated number, employed by God in the guidance and government of his people. Thus, when the time of the seventy weeks of Daniel was fulfilled, a new government took the place of the old, though under a very different form. The seventy did not stand by the side of our Lord as counsellors, nor yet did they sit round Him as being the true High Priest; but by two and two they prepared his way before Him, in every town and village of the Jewish land; and afterwards, as His messengers to every creature, preached Him in all countries, as "He that hath come and shall come." So these disciples labouring in Judea, and during this peculiar condition of the people of Israel, were the type and picture of those missionaries who, in countless multitudes, should go forth to evangelize the world. And most wonderfully has that eternal work of God spread and increased, which began then in such simplicity.

THE APOSTLES CHOSEN.

In the third chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, the choice of the Apostles is related in the following manner: "And He" (Jesus) "goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would, and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them

forth to preach ; and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." The Evangelist repeats the names of the twelve, and adds that Jesus gave Simon the surname of Peter, and James and John the name of Boanerges, that is to say, the sons of thunder.

This solemn consecration to the Apostleship took place upon the mountain to which Jesus had conducted them. It is worthy of remark, that God through every age had chosen the mountains and high places of the earth from which to manifest his grace and truth unto men. On mount Ararat, in Armenia, He renewed his covenant with Noah ; Abraham must make a two days' journey, in order to undergo upon mount Moriah the severe trial of his faith ; on Sinai, Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, received the law ; from mount Ebal he uttered the curse, and from mount Gerizim the blessing upon Israel. For a thousand years the tabernacle of God rested upon mount Zion, the only place upon earth where, during that time, the only true God was worshipped ; and on mount Horeb, Jehovah manifested to the persecuted prophet the mysteries of His grace and truth in the government of the world. It happened, in like manner, during the time of the new covenant. It was on a mountain that the Lord Jesus first preached his heavenly doctrine, and expounded the law to his disciples and the assembled people ; on the holy mountain He was glorified before the eyes of his three most faithful disciples ; Golgotha was the mountain on which the Lamb of God that taketh

away the sin of the world was offered up a sacrifice for us ; and it was from the Mount of Olives that our eternal Prophet, High Priest, and King ascended into heaven.

Thus the mountains and high places of the Holy Land are of great importance in the history of the kingdom of God, and are, like geographical charts, closely connected with it. This is another sign of the condescending grace and love of God towards men. Do we not all feel a secret instinct impelling us, a mysterious attraction drawing us towards our home above ? And when we are on the summit of a high mountain, it seems as though we were nearer heaven, and more susceptible of divine influences ; for the earthly heights are a type and symbol of the glorious heavenly mountains. It is for this reason altars were usually erected upon high places ; and our churches, with their towers, are symbolical of the elevation of our hearts, eyes, and hands towards Him who dwelleth in the highest.

Thus the Lord led his disciples to that mountain where he had passed the night in prayer and communion with his heavenly Father. Elevated far above the noise and tumult of the world, they stood near the clouds, with the earth at their feet ; for silence and solitude were most appropriate to the holy work which was about to be performed. It is interesting to observe how the Son of Man condescended to employ the aid of outward circumstance, in order to impress more vividly that which is holy on the minds of his followers. Well might the Apostles henceforward say,

“ On this mountain hath He chosen us ;” and Peter writes also in his second Epistle, “ This voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

The words of the Gospel are, “ And calleth unto him whom he would,” that is to say, those He had chosen from the number of disciples to be his apostles. “ And they came unto Him, and he ordained twelve,” or, in other words, solemnly set them apart as his Apostles, “ that they should be with Him,” and be connected with Him in the closest manner, never to forsake Him. He now sent them forth to preach ; and, as witnesses of his glory, gave them power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

Here we behold the works and signs by which we may recognise the apostolic office. They must be called and chosen by the Lord himself,—they must have seen and heard Him,—be joined with Him in the closest fellowship,—preach the gospel to all the world, wherever their Master should appoint,—and lastly, they must have received the gift of miracles.

Our Lord first chose the eldest of his disciples, Simon Peter ; then the two sons of Zebedee, John and James ; the three before whom He was afterwards transfigured, and of whom St. Paul says, in his Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 9, “ who seemed to be pillars.” The others were “ Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him.”

BOANERGES, OR THE SONS OF THUNDER.

Our Lord distinguished his three favourite disciples in a peculiar manner, when he gave them their surnames. The name of a man betokens his character and personality. As each person has his own peculiar appearance, so each has his peculiar name, which distinguishes him from other men, and shows his personality as a human being, endued with reason and freedom of will. In every nation, and in every age, it has been customary to give a child a name, on its entrance into the world, whereby its parents and relations, and afterwards the wider circle of its fellow-citizens, may distinguish it. Among Christians the name is given at the same time as the rite of baptism is administered; and thus our name is calculated to remind us, not only of our value in the eyes of men, but of our moral dignity, as beings renewed and regenerated in this holy sacrament.

There are innumerable examples in the Holy Scriptures, of parents giving their children significant names, sometimes on account of the divine promises, or the peculiar circumstances under which they were born, sometimes on account of the hopes and expectations which they entertained regarding them. Thus the names which Eve gave her children had their peculiar meaning; the name of Moses, also, has its sig-

nification, "taken out of the water;" and Rachel, when she was on the point of death, called her son Benoni, that is to say, "son of my sorrow." But how much more important must it be, when God himself gives new names to those whom He has chosen to be the instruments of his grace. Thus God changed the name of Abram, which signifies great-father or arch-father, into Abraham, that is to say, father of a multitude or of many people,—a symbol of the promise, that through him the blessing should come unto all men. Joshua had formerly been called Hoshea; but when he was chosen to be the representative and successor of Moses, to lead the people into the promised land, he received the symbolical name of Joshua, which signifies hero or saviour, (the Greek of which is Jesus.) The patriarch Jacob received from God the additional name of Israel, by which also his descendants are designated to the present day. The name of the forerunner of our Lord, as well as that of the Messiah, to whom he bore testimony, was made known to their parents by a heavenly manifestation.

Jesus also gave some of his disciples appropriate names, when he constituted them his Apostles. Simon he named Peter, or, as in the Hebrew, Cephas, which signifies a rock, or a man of rock. It did not imply that he had been that already, but that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was to become the rock on which the Lord should build his church. The two sons of Zebedee also received a most expressive and powerful name; He called them Boanerges, that is to say, the sons of thunder. A mystery lies hid in this

appellation, of which there have been various interpretations.

Our Lord had certainly some far-seeing view, in giving the two brothers a name so full of meaning ; it probably referred to nothing external, but to the spiritual and internal character, the peculiar disposition and future usefulness of the two disciples. In the same manner, the name of Peter betokened the bold and strong character of Simon, and signified not what he was, but what he should afterwards become. The name of Boanerges, or sons of thunder, had a similar signification ; that the natural ardour and concealed fire in the hearts of the sons of Zebedee, unless it were purified and directed by the Spirit of God, might become like the destroying tempest ; whereas, if it were sanctified by the power of God, it would resemble the fructifying rain. Thus, in the Holy Scriptures, the word of God is frequently compared to thunder, its power to lightning, and its efficacy to rain and dew.

The gospel merely destroys sin and sinfulness in the heart of believers, and not the peculiarities of their mind and character, although it certainly purifies them from all that is bad and wicked. It does not, however, do this by constraint ; but gently, and by the co-operation of their own powers and talents. For this reason, we find in the Gospel that the minds and tempers of the disciples are variously represented, and their dispositions well contrasted. Can any characters be more unlike than those of Peter, John, and Paul ? Their writings also bear each their peculiar stamp ; for God gives one Spirit, but various talents and graces.

John and James were truly sons of thunder ; their souls were filled with a fire and power, which rendered them equally capable of a deep and silent love, and of a fierce and burning anger, raging like a storm between heaven and earth ; Peter, on the contrary, resembled a rock, firm and steadily fixed to the ground on which it stands. To prove this trait in the character of John, we shall select three of the most remarkable anecdotes regarding him, which the Evangelists have preserved to us.

The disciples having disputed among themselves which should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, “ Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Upon this John seems to have been touched in his heart, for he confessed, “ Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us ; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.” John and the other disciples manifested here an untimely zeal, harshness, jealousy and envy towards a man who, being probably a follower of John, performed miracles through faith in the Lord and by the power of his name, and whose only difference from themselves consisted in not being one of the disciples. John himself appears to have been the originator of this action ; but it is beautiful to observe, how he now candidly confesses it to his Mas-

ter,—certainly impelled by a feeling of repentance, awakened in his bosom by the words of the Lord with regard to the child.

The next example we shall cite, is where our Lord was refused admittance into the Samaritan village, while journeying towards Jerusalem to keep the pass-over. “When his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

What fiery zeal, on the part of the sons of thunder! To destroy a village, with every one of its inhabitants, on account of its refusing to receive them! Yet love towards their Master can be discerned, even in the untimely ardour of the two disciples; although it was not a proper love, nor were they moved on this occasion by the spirit of the gentle and lowly Jesus. The two brothers, probably, never afterwards forgot the mild yet earnest reproof of their Lord; yet we perceive symptoms of a holy indignation against the contemners of Jesus and his truth, in John’s second Epistle, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that bid-deth him God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.”

The third instance we shall mention, is when James and John, with their mother Salome, entreated our Lord to exalt them above the other disciples, and permit them to sit in his future kingdom, the one at his right hand, the other at his left. Jesus, with fatherly wisdom and gentleness, showed them the folly of their wishes, and disclosed to them the mysterious future ; that He had not come in order to serve himself, but in order to serve, and give his life a ransom for many.

It is not to be denied, that the bold request of the sons of Zebedee and of their mother Salome, disclosed an ambition most inconsistent with the character of disciples of that lowly Jesus, who sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him. Yet this petition proves them to have been possessed of a soul which, contemning earthly things, strove after the highest and best gifts, and was ready and willing to sacrifice all in order to attain them. When Jesus said, " Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

This narrative proves in what a kind and benevolent relation our Lord stood towards his disciples ; although shining in the midst of them, as the sun amidst the planets, yet condescending to converse with them graciously and parentally. They, on the other hand, full of the deepest veneration, seeing and admiring his glory, yet with child-like confidence opening their hearts to him, enjoying the light of

his countenance, and concealing nothing from him, like sons without guile in the presence of a strict though tender Father. Well might our Lord address them in the words, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

JOHN, THE DISCIPLE WHOM THE LORD LOVED.

John, as we have seen, was by no means free from human faults and errors. And, why should we expect him to be so? The Son of man came to seek that which was lost, and to save sinners; and as his disciples stood in the nearest relation to him, they first experienced his saving power, as they were also the principal witnesses of his glory. Though our Lord called John to be his disciple, he had been born and conceived in sin like other men; and was far removed from that perfection of character which the disciples, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, were enabled to attain by means of the Holy Spirit. Certainly he does not except himself when he writes in his first Epistle, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." History proves that, like Peter, though perhaps in a different

manner, he had to strive against his own flesh and blood.

But whatever might be his errors and imperfections, there was a principle in his soul which was destined, in time, to overcome all human weakness ; and like the breath of life, penetrating through body, soul, and spirit, to purify and sanctify all. This principle was his heart-felt love for his Master, the leading spring of his existence. In reference to this love, and looking back to the period when Jesus walked amongst them, and they beheld his glory, John styles himself in his Gospel, "the disciple whom the Lord loved."

By this designation John did not wish to raise himself above the other disciples, nor to assume a superiority over them, as if Jesus had either loved them less or preferred him before them. Such an intention could not possibly have entered his soul, when he wrote such a glorious Gospel. No, it was only a child-like and humble, though joyful and thankful spirit, which led him to do so ; the same which prompted him to rest on the bosom of Jesus while they sat at meat, and to listen earnestly to his words. And, does not the latter circumstance imply a sort of child-like relation between the youngest of the Apostles and that beloved Master, of whom John alone, in describing his communion with the Father, uses the expression, "which is in the bosom of the Father?" John i. 18.

Some have also supposed, that his calling himself "the disciple whom the Lord loved," is in reality a

paraphrase of the name John, which literally signifies one favoured by the Lord. But, in short, had not John a right to call himself so, when he was the disciple who remained with Jesus on the cross till the last, and received from him the charge of his mother, as the dearest possession he could bestow? Was not this indeed a proof that He loved him?

The love which he felt towards his Master, and which his Master's love towards him had created and cherished, empowered and gave him courage to appropriate to himself this glorious title. And the more this love unfolded itself, the more was the soul of the beloved disciple purified by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and the more did it shine with a lustre like that of his heavenly Master.

Let us "love him, because He first loved us," is the spirit and soul which pervades all the writings of our Apostle. But far be it from us to characterise this love as a mere human attachment, formed to our Lord as a man full of gentleness, simplicity, and kindness. This was not the love felt by John, for it was manly, sincere, and ardent, nay, even upon some occasions fiery; as a flame of the Lord consuming that which is unholy; stronger than death, and faster than the grave; "which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it; and if a man would give all the substance of his house for this love, it would utterly be contemned." Our disciple proved it to be thus, while our Lord hung bleeding in shame and in agony upon the cross.

JOHN IN HIS INTERCOURSE WITH JESUS.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life ; for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.....And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

With these words our Apostle commences his first Epistle to the Christians ; and we may well wonder at his strange style and frequent repetitions. But when the heart is full the mouth overfloweth, and the style becomes exuberant. The moment he begins to write, he seems to behold the form of him whom his soul loved ; and he is overpowered by the remembrance of his three years' intercourse with the Messiah, when he was deemed worthy of beholding “ his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” All this rises once more in vivid reality before the soul of the disciple whom Jesus loved ; and he seems to renew his youth while he describes what he has heard, seen, and his hands have handled of the Word of life. How inexpressibly blessed must this period have been to a heart and spirit like that of

John!—when, along with the other disciples, he constantly accompanied Jesus during his wanderings; when he was a witness of his preaching and miracles; and when the glory and majesty of his Lord and Master were daily unfolded to his wondering eyes. With noble simplicity he expresses himself in the words, “He dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.”

Yes, what a glorious time must this have been for our Apostle! Three years passed in the society of the incarnate Redeemer, of the Son of God walking upon earth in a human form. Each day seemed a year, so rich in word and miracle, such as ear had never heard and eye had never seen!

Although John in his Gospel describes but few of the actions of our Lord, in comparison of the other Evangelists; yet, it is generally supposed, he was present at most, if not at all the miracles performed by Jesus,—from the marriage at Cana of Galilee, down to the resurrection of Lazarus. For is it improbable that the disciple who was present at his beloved Master’s seizure, and who remained with him even to the end, should have left him even for a short period, and not accompanied him everywhere? The other Evangelists also seldom make mention in their writings of their fellow-disciples; quite as seldom as John names and speaks of himself in his own Gospel. Little even of that which he said on various occasions is recorded; and in this we see his character and disposition; for we take it for granted that he spoke but little, and that seldom. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;” but there is also a fulness of the

heart in which the mouth is silent. Thus it might be with John ; deep, silent admiration and love filled his soul in the contemplation of him on whom his whole existence depended. For the more calmly a rivulet flows, the more clearly are the heavens and the flowers on its brink depicted in its watery mirror ;—so it was with the soul of the disciple. It was otherwise with Simon Peter, who had always words and the boldest language at command, sometimes even at improper times. At Capernaum, when many of the disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus ; and when He turned to the twelve, and said, “ Will ye also go away ? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” John, however, was silent, but preserved in his heart those precious words which Peter had spoken, and afterwards wrote them down in his Gospel.

It is interesting to observe how the sacred history delineates each individual, according to his peculiar fashion and character, describing him exactly as he lived and acted. By its very simplicity, it attains the highest object of history, namely, that of resembling a faithful mirror.

JOHN, THE CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND OF OUR LORD.

The Gospel history shows us the various human relations in which the Lord Jesus manifested himself, or as Paul writes in the Epistle to the Philippians, that He was “found in fashion as a man,” “and was made in the likeness of men.” Thus He took delight in the varied forms of nature, in plants and trees, in the ears of corn, and the fruitful seed, in the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field ; and employed them all, by means of parables, to bear witness to his truth, and to illustrate the mysteries of his glory. He also showed peculiar love for little children, took them in his arms and blessed them, and made use of them in his sermons as living examples to explain his doctrine. At the marriage in Cana of Galilee, He rejoiced with the joyful guests, and increased their pleasure, while He manifested his glory. In the hospitable house at Bethany, He participated in the happiness of the family circle : and He disdained no more to enter the dwelling of a despised publican, than to sit as an invited guest at the feasts of the chief of the Pharisees. But particularly in the circle of his disciples, He seemed the father of a family surrounded by his children ; and attending to the peculiarities in the character of each, and bringing them all up in wisdom and love. The Evangelists have described this in pious simplicity ; and the union of

the divine and the human in the character of our Saviour, shines forth as distinctly from their writings as though it were reflected in a calm lake.

Our Lord now chose from amongst the twelve three confidential disciples, namely, Simon Peter, and the two brothers, James and John. They were hereby rendered superior to the others; perhaps on account of their riper understandings, or of some peculiarity in their very different characters, which might distinguish them from the remaining nine; at all events, our Saviour in electing them must have had far-seeing views into the future. Peter was the eldest of the apostles, and had often been addressed by our Lord as their representative; he generally took the lead, and at the feast of Pentecost preached to the multitude. John, the youngest of all, was distinguished by the fervour and silent depth of his character. James seems to have been something between the two, resembling Peter in zeal and fire of disposition, and his brother in devotedness and fervour. He was the first among the apostles who sealed the truth with his blood; for Herod Agrippa caused him to be beheaded in Jerusalem, at the instigation of the Jews.

These three stood in the closest relation to our Lord, during his pilgrimage on earth. All the disciples regarded him as their illuminating Sun; but these three, in particular, seemed to be influenced by the light which proceeded from him, and in their lives reflected the image of their Master. For this reason He chose them to be his confidential friends; probably, also, with reference to the government of

the future Christian community ; which the disciples, as planets revolving round the sun, at that moment represented.

THE THREE APOSTLES CHOSEN BY OUR LORD TO
WITNESS HIS GLORY.

There are three instances mentioned in the Gospels in which Jesus chose Peter, James, and John to be the witnesses of His glory. The first was the raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Although the miracles of our Lord, taken merely as proofs of his divine power and character, are all equal, and no one is greater than another ; yet in the eyes of men they are not so : and curing the blind, or those sick of the palsy, is not so remarkable as raising a man from the dead. Perhaps because death is in itself so mysterious and terrible, being utter annihilation in appearance, against which no human power can avail ; and because such an action, on the part of our Lord, proved him to be the conqueror of what is termed in Corinthians “ the last enemy.” Perhaps, also, because the awakening from their sleep of those who are in their graves is closely connected with that great judgment which is to be the last action of God in his government of the world. Taking it in this view, we may say, that

raising from the dead is a greater and more important miracle than any other performed by our Lord Jesus. He who can overcome death must, according to human ideas, be able to overcome all things.

The daughter of Jairus being restored to life, was the first miracle of the kind performed by Jesus Christ; it was afterwards followed by two others, that of the young man at Nain, and of Lazarus of Bethany. After the sorrowful Jairus had petitioned our Lord to come to the help of his sick daughter, they received the intelligence when on the road towards his house, that the maiden was dead. Jesus then turned to him, and said, "Be not afraid, only believe." On their arrival at the mansion, suffering no one to follow him save the three favoured disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the damsel; He said unto the mourners, "Why make ye this ado and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." He then stepped towards the corpse, and in heavenly accents uttered the words, "Tabitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." And immediately the damsel arose, and walked, and He gave her back to her parents.

John, who was present along with Peter and James, does not relate this occurrence in his Gospel; but, on the other hand, he has narrated in the most circumstantial manner the resurrection of Lazarus, which is not to be found in the writings of the other Evangelists. If it should be asked, why the latter do not mention it, when all the four have related together many facts far less important. I should answer, that

a feeling of propriety probably induced them to leave the description of this miracle, and the words of Jesus connected with it, to that disciple whom the Lord loved, and who probably on this occasion stood nearest him. The narration of this miracle distinguishes John from the other Evangelists, for it is a bright testimony of the glory of the only Son of the Father, who is the resurrection and the life; it preceded the deep humiliation and suffering of Jesus, inbittered against him the tools of hell, and hastened the execution of their projects; in short, it was the deed, above all others, which, before this night of darkness commenced, manifested the glory of the Prince of Life.

Another occasion on which the three chosen disciples only were present, was the glorification of our Lord upon the holy mountain;—when “He was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;” when Moses and Elias came and conversed with him; when a voice was heard out of the bright cloud which overshadowed them, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” It is almost to be wondered at, that John does not allude in his Gospel, by a single word, to this glorious manifestation. I am of opinion, however, that this peculiar silence on the part of our Apostle proceeded from a degree of delicacy, which induced him merely to relate those occurrences in the life of Jesus which are historical and circumstantial, and leave the rest to be mentioned by the other sacred writers; particularly

those events in which our Lord appears more as a passive agent than speaking and acting. To this class belong the transfiguration; the history of our Lord's baptism, which John repeats from the mouth of the Baptist; the temptation; and that which most nearly resembles the transfiguration, namely, the ascent of Jesus into heaven. The transfiguration upon the holy mountain was also a type, though perhaps but a feeble one, of that future and heavenly glory, into which our Lord had entered when our Apostle wrote his Gospel. Certainly John was thinking upon what had passed on the mount, when he wrote the words, "And dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.)" John had been in the Island of Patmos before he wrote his Gospel, and beheld, through the Spirit, not only future times, but the Lord of glory himself; why, then, should he not yield to the other Evangelists the honour of describing the transfiguration upon the mountain, which was but the shadow of those great things which he himself had seen? The four Evangelists, however, in composing their Gospels, did not make an agreement as to what each should write; they were led by their feelings to suit them to the various necessities of those to whom they were addressed; and at the same time, were enabled by the Spirit of God to write them with such wonderful simplicity and uniformity, that we may even term them miraculous.

The third occasion on which Jesus selected the three disciples to accompany him, was during his suffering in the garden of Gethsemane. They who

had beheld his transfiguration on the mountain were now to be the only witnesses of His deep humiliation in the dark valley of the shadow of death, where He was to receive that cup which the inexplicable counsel of his Father had appointed him to drink. The Lord himself compares his sorrows to a cup, and thereby expresses that all the sufferings which his soul was to undergo were now at hand ; it was as if a vessel had been filled, out of which he was compelled to drink. Indeed, our Lord had already asked his disciples, “ Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of ? ” The Scriptures, in order to express an overflowing quantity, often use the term “ cup ; ”—for instance, “ cup of joy,” “ of salvation,” “ of anger,” “ of suffering,” “ of sorrow,” &c. In the latter case, it was a cup of gall and bitterness which Jesus beheld in spirit,—a symbol of his deepest humiliation, and of that fearful death which he as the Lamb of God was to suffer, for the sins and for the salvation of the world.

John does not mention in his Gospel that severe and mysterious passion, of which he was a spectator ; he merely alludes to the garden, and the path which led to it over the brook Cedron ; the same which David crossed, accompanied by his weeping friends when he fled from his son Absalom. Our Evangelist is silent respecting the mysterious conflict of the Son of man during the dark midnight hour ; perhaps because his spirit failed when he attempted to express in word and writing what he had witnessed. There is a silence which is sacred ; and to whom was it more suitable than to the disciple who leaned on the bosom of our

Lord? John has left the other Evangelists to describe this severe conflict, which was the last temptation of the prince of darkness, as well as the first temptation in the wilderness of Judea. On the other hand, he alone has preserved to us the high-priest-like prayer which Jesus uttered ; and thereby shown us the inexpressible greatness of the suffering Redeemer, and the love wherewith he loveth his own even unto the end.

JOHN A WITNESS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS.

We are now come to that part of our history which describes the presence of our Apostle, and the part which he took, during the sufferings of our Lord. As he had hitherto been constantly at the side of the Son of David, so he must also remain there until the end.

Peter and John, the eldest and the youngest of the disciples, were those whom Jesus sent before him to Jerusalem, in order to prepare the feast of the pass-over. Our Lord conferred on them a great distinction in thus assigning them an active part in preparing for an institution, which, as a memorial of his love and of the sacrifice of himself, was to be of the highest importance to all faithful believers even until the end of the world. The Lord gave them for a sign, that on

their entrance into Jerusalem they would meet a man bearing a piteher of water ; him they were to follow into whatever house he entered, and say to the good-man, " The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disiples ? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished ; there make ready." In the style of the commission which the two messengers received, there seems a sort of intimation that our Lord was about to add something new, of an important and mysterious nature, to the solemnization of the paschal feast. This was even implied by the choice of the two disciples.

John relates little concerning the last passover which Jesus held with his disciples, and does not even allude to the institution of the Lord's supper. This need not astonish us when we consider that John wrote his Gospel for advanced Christians, who long had enjoyed, and viewed the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist as institutions appointed by God. It is for this reason also, that John nowhere refers to the institution of baptism. There is another view, besides, which we must take ; the historical account of those holy institutions, and the appointment of outward signs of the covenant, seem by no means so suitable to the spirit of John's Gospel as those other subjects which were constantly present before his soul, namely, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and of that other Comforter whom he promised to send to his disciples.

On the other hand, John alone has transmitted to us the beautiful account of the washing of the dis-

ciples' feet. One might almost imagine that the other Evangelists had silently yielded to him the honour of describing this act of our Lord, or, perhaps, expressly enjoined it. It is a history from the very heart of Jesus; and therefore most particularly belonged to that disciple who leaned on his bosom. It begins with the beautiful words, "When Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John then interrupts himself; but afterwards continues, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." He washed all, one after another, until He came to Peter, who showed his self-sufficient humility by striving against him, not even omitting the traitor Judas, for he washed his feet also, and dried them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

During the feast, John, like another Benjamin, lay on the bosom of Jesus; and Peter, beckoning to him, made signs that he should ask his Master of whom He spake, when He said that one of them should betray him. Jesus then pointed out to him Judas Iscariot, by giving him the sop of bread which he dipped in the dish; thus giving the beloved disciple a proof

of his confidence, which he himself has related in the end of his Gospel.

John takes the same opportunity of relating the presumptuous self-confidence of Peter, and the prophecy of our Lord concerning his three-fold denial ; as if none of the Evangelists dared to omit this testimony of human weakness to the divine foreknowledge of Jesus ; for they have all described in their writings both the self-reliance, and the fall of this apostle.

We shall not now enlarge on the precious words uttered by our Lord during these mysterious days, passed among his disciples immediately preceding his death : John has preserved them, particularly the prayer of Jesus in his character of High Priest. We shall only say, that the beloved disciple was chosen by Jesus, and endued with the fulness of his Spirit, that he might preserve his last words as a precious treasure, for the benefit of every Christian ; and in what a blessing are we hereby enabled to participate !

JOHN IN GETHSEMANE, AND ON GOLGOTHA.

They now passed over the brook Cedron into the garden of Gethsemane ; and here began our Lord's passion, of which John, and the two other chosen apostles, were the nearest witnesses. As we have al-

ready seen, he is silent concerning this mysterious and inexplicable circumstance, which the other Evangelists have related so minutely ; perhaps, because they were not eye-witnesses of it. It was a terrible and awful hour, when, as Paul says, the eternal High Priest “ offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death.” The Gospel which John wrote is principally a testimony to that glory of Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, which he himself had seen ; while the other Evangelists seem to follow the thread of history ; and their Gospels merit this praise, that in them the hand of man is scarcely discernible. In John’s, on the contrary, we see everywhere the character of the man appearing, and the heart of the disciple may be discerned throughout. He must, however, finish the history of the sufferings of Jesus, and that in his own peculiar manner ; so that, through the darkness of hell and death, the light and life of the Lamb of God may shine forth.

John, like his companions Peter and James, was overpowered by fatigue and sleep during the suffering of his beloved Master ; and to him, along with them, was addressed the reproof, “ What ! could ye not watch with me one hour ? ” as well as the words of excusing love, “ The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” In him also the words of prophecy were fulfilled, “ They shall smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered ; ” for he fled with the other disciples when Jesus was taken prisoner, and led away bound.

But when the first terror was over, John and Peter followed the multitude from afar, even to the palace of the high priest. John, who was acquainted with the high priest, went into the inner-court of the palace ; but Peter had remained without, until his companion had persuaded the keeper of the gate to admit him. Here is now related the three-fold denial of Peter, after which he went out deeply humbled, and wept bitterly. John, in comparison with the other Evangelists, relates this event with peculiar forbearance. Errors ought to have no place in the history of our Lord's sufferings ; and this is only mentioned because Jesus had prophesied it, and because it is intimately connected with his history. John relates it in the most simple manner ; and the crowing of the cock, which had been foretold, ends the recital with the words, " And immediately the cock crew." The Evangelist concludes by announcing the break of day, and the dawn of the morning-star, in the heart of his humbled brother. It is as if he felt there was no need to allude to Peter's bitter and tearful repentance.

John remained with his beloved Master during all the terrible circumstances which took place. He accompanied him from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod again to Pilate ; beheld him clad in the purple robe with the crown of thorns upon his head ; and followed him along the fearful path which led to the death of a malefactor. Thus we find him at last under the cross upon mount Calvary !

The love which animated the heart of the beloved disciple was of wonderful constancy and fervour, for

it endured and suffered all things. Near to John stood the mother of Jesus, who now experienced the words of Simeon, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Beside her, though at a greater distance, stood the other women who had accompanied and ministered to Jesus during his pilgrimage.

Their love appears almost to equal that of the sorrowing mother, who, in this fearful hour, cannot bear to leave her son ; for the ties which bind them together are now far stronger than ever. Jesus acknowledged the faithfulness of his disciple, and even on the cross rewarded it in the most touching and expressive manner. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother !" Thus, while intrusting the blessed Virgin to the care of his disciple, He enjoined upon him the tenderest of all human relations, that of a son towards his mother. Could John have received a more sacred possession, a better consolation, or a stronger proof of his Master's love ?

"And from that hour," writes he himself, "that disciple took her unto his own home," from the moment when he received the command of the Lord Jesus, and from the beginning of the three hours of darkness during which our Lord in silence hung upon the cross. In all probability, the other women accompanied the mother of Jesus ; and John afterwards returned to Golgotha.

An old tradition states, that John maintained the

Virgin in his house at Jerusalem until her death, which took place fifteen years afterwards ; and we can well imagine with how much tenderness and love.

The Gospel of John relates nothing more concerning the mother of our Lord ; the other Evangelists also are henceforward silent, with the exception of Luke, who, in his Acts of the Apostles, mentions her once as joining with the disciples in prayer and supplication. This is the last time that her name is mentioned in the New Testament ; and it is strange that such a silence is maintained on the subsequent history of the holiest among women. Her holiness, however, did not proceed from herself, but from him whose name is “called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

JOHN AT THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JESUS.

Let us now picture to ourselves the beloved disciple standing immoveable under the cross of the Redeemer ; the two bleeding criminals on either side ; and our Lord hanging in the midst. Before him are the rude heathen soldiery ; and round about are multitudes of people of every class, mocking and reviling ; among the rest the exasperated, though now triumphant priests and scribes. With what feelings of indignation and sorrow do the eyes of John now rest

upon him whom his soul loved, and whose glory he had beheld ! He now watches him as he dies—He who had said, “ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself ; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again ”—He who had so shortly before proved himself to be the resurrection and the life, and the Prince of Life. John received the last words of his mouth, and then beheld him bow his head and give up the ghost. In his Gospel he has preserved his Master’s last words, “ It is finished ; ” but he has not written down the prayer of humanity, “ Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

When the corpse was hanging pale and bloody on the cross, John remained by its side, unheeding the noise of the earthquake or the rending of the rocks asunder. With what anguish he must have watched the soldiers, while they brake the legs of the two malefactors ! And with what joy does he now relate, “ But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not his legs.” “ For these things were done,” he continues, “ that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.” Another circumstance took place which appears to him of deep importance ; one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with a spear, upon which there ran out blood and water : John then continues, “ And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.” All that took place in the history

of our Lord had, in the eyes of our Apostle, a deep and mysterious meaning ; and this circumstance not the least so, for the words in his first Epistle evidently refer to it, “ And there are three that bear witness in earth ; the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.” The Spirit is what is formed in man regenerated through the preaching of the gospel, the water is the sacrament of baptism, and the blood that of the Lord’s supper. John also applies another prophecy to this circumstance, “ They shall look on him whom they pierced.”

When Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who had hitherto in secret been worshippers and followers of our Lord, took down the body from the cross, and having embalmed it, buried it in the sepulchre cut in the rock in which never man had been laid ; John, without doubt, was present, and assisted them. One may see from his circumstantial narration, that this last honour which they showed to their beloved Master at his death was well pleasing to the heart of his favourite disciple. It was the sacrifice of reverence and of love, which the circumstances of the most shameful death had not weakened, but, on the contrary, had increased.

And how joyfully could John now name him, whom the other Evangelists neglected to mention,—Nicodemus, as a decided believer, who no longer was ashamed to confess his Lord !

JOHN AT THE RESURRECTION.

While Jesus was resting in the grave, the disciples, and the women who had followed him, were like sheep that had lost their shepherd. With what anguish their hearts must have been torn, when they no longer beheld that beloved Master in the midst of them, whose intercourse they had enjoyed for three whole years ! Their grief and sorrow were so much the greater, for they had been connected with him in the closest manner ; He was the vine, they were the branches ; they had received from him their spiritual and renewed life, and had constantly been nourished and instructed by him. Well might they now be termed orphans, and well might they now mourn.

Certainly our Lord Jesus, when he prophesied beforehand of the sufferings he should undergo, had told them also that he should rise again from the dead on the third day. But the incomprehensible and astounding nature of those events which had recently taken place, might partly have extinguished their remembrance of it ; and perhaps, also, they classed the prophecy concerning the resurrection on the third day among the words of our Lord which they were not to take in their literal sense, because they shadowed forth the future ; or they said in their hearts, like Martha, “ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection

at the last day," John xi. 24. In short, they neither thought nor believed that He would rise again now in a bodily form. Why should they not then mourn? Even Thomas, who was one of the twelve, fell into a state of doubt and despair, separating himself for several days from the rest of the disciples.

The holy Scriptures unreservedly describe the state of mind in which the disciples were, and in no way conceal their timidity and fear of the Jews, that is to say, of the supreme council, who had by their artifices effected the death of Jesus. Can we wonder at this, on the part of the followers of our Lord? Had they not lost in their blessed Master the support of their existence, the object of their hope; and must not the cause of Christ, which in their eyes was indissolubly connected with his human existence, now appear completely hopeless? Thus the wicked violence and oppressive power of those men who had slain Jesus now hovered like a dark thunder-cloud over their souls, and filled the dispirited disciples with fear and trembling. As in times of dread and danger, when the earthquake shakes human dwellings, and the rafters of the houses crack, even after tranquillity is restored, timid man continues to fear, and the slightest sound fills him with terror. So it was with the disciples; although their love towards him who had fallen asleep was in no degree diminished.

As soon as the Sabbath was over, the pious women, who had accompanied and ministered to the wants of our Lord and his disciples, prepared to show the last tokens of their love and veneration towards his dead

body. Thus the days had passed ; it had been evening and morning, the evening had come again, and now the third day was dawning ; and they still mourned and feared on account of the Jews.

Lo ! then came Mary Magdalene, full of sorrow and anguish, to Simon Peter and John, and said unto them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." At break of day she had gone out of Jerusalem, along with the other women, to anoint the dead body ; but having hastened before them, found the grave open and empty ; and deeply grieved by the idea that the beloved corpse, which she still named "the Lord," had been taken away, she had run back with the tidings to the two disciples. These hastened now to Joseph's garden ; "they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre." Thus the Gospel history mentions the smallest traits in the lives of the saints ; the formerly rash and precipitate Peter now remained behind, as if he had been carrying a burden ; and certainly his heart must have been heavy, for he had denied his Lord.

John came first to the grave ; he remained standing before it, looked in and beheld the linen, the linen clothes without the body ; but he did not go in. This he himself describes, though he does not mention the feelings of his heart. Peter came after him, and, without thinking, entered the sepulchre ; he saw the linen clothes, which had bound the body of Jesus, lying in order, and the napkin, which had been about

his head, wrapped in a place by itself. This did not appear like a robbery. When Peter had described to John the appearance of the things, he who had arrived first at the sepulchre went in, and "saw and believed." John writes this himself, and adds, "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." Thus John began to believe in the resurrection of the Lord; faith awoke in his heart, and the expressions of Jesus with regard to it now recurred to him, and suddenly became clear. John appears, according to his usual silent custom, to have concealed within his own breast his dawning faith; and concludes his narration with the words, "Then the disciples went away again unto their own home."

Our Lord soon after this manifested himself to all his disciples, and, as Luke relates in his Acts of the Apostles, "shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." It is very evident that John was present at those manifestations of his risen Master, as he had formerly been at his sufferings; but it must have been with deeper, and, at the same time, with more exalted feelings. Jesus was the same as formerly, but now He had overcome death; humanly, but yet in a superhuman manner, he walked in the midst of his disciples; still a pilgrim upon earth, He ate and drank with his followers, shewed them his wounds, and the marks of the nails on his hands, and yet, what splendour and glory shone around him!

The Evangelists are silent here, as elsewhere, concerning his personal appearance ; but how often, during the forty days, must the heart of the beloved disciple have burned within him, when he beheld the countenance, and listened to the words, of his beloved Master ! And yet he is silent ! He mentions himself, however, twice after this, in the 21st chapter of his Gospel, which seems to be a sort of appendix, added after the rest had been completed.

That the apostle had at first intended to close his Gospel with the 20th chapter, is evident from its concluding words, “ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book ; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing, ye might have life through his name.” What induced him at a later period to add the supplement contained in the 21st chapter, for want of sufficient information, we cannot explain. That Gospel which the ancient Fathers of the church have in a peculiar manner designated as the spiritual one, combines, with wonderful depth of meaning, a child-like simplicity of recital, whereby the mind and temper of its holy writer everywhere shines forth. This we can more peculiarly discern in the supplement to his Gospel, in which he and Simon Peter, in conjunction with our Lord, appear to be the chief actors.

Peter and John were bound together by the ties of love ; and at the time the latter wrote the supplement to his Gospel, it is probable the former had al-

ready glorified the Lord by the manner of his death. John now remembered that occurrence at Gennesareth, in which Peter was so deeply concerned. He had already related his fall, but not his repentance and tears ; and for this reason he now describes his reconciliation with the Lord. The touching recital in the 21st chapter may be compared to a monument erected by one Apostle in memory of another. It is also a full acknowledgment of the love entertained by Peter towards our Lord, which was now sanctified and strengthened by his deep humiliation, and which, according to his Master's prophecy, he was to ratify by his death.

The history is as follows : The first manifestation of Jesus after his resurrection, took place in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood ; after which the disciples, according to his command, went to Galilee, near the sea of Gennesareth. Here they awaited further disclosures from their heavenly Master. One evening, as they sat together, Peter who, from temperament, could not long remain inactive, said, " I go a fishing ;" the other disciples replied, " We also go with thee." In this manner, they returned probably for the last time to their early occupation. They fished during the whole night, but caught nothing. In the twilight of the morning, they beheld a man at a distance standing on the bank ; it was Jesus, but they did not recognise him. The unknown one called to them, " Children, have ye any meat ?" that is to say, fish ; which, next to bread, is the most general food in the East. They replied, " No ;" upon which the unknown

one advised them to cast their nets on the right side of the ship ; they did so, and caught such a multitude of fishes that they had great difficulty in pulling them in again. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, " It is the Lord ;" and Peter, who was only half-clad, hastily threw on his fisher's coat, and girding himself, flung himself into the sea, and swam across, the other disciples following him in the ship with the heavy laden net. On the land they found a fire of coals, fish laid thereon, and bread. This was the meal prepared for them by our Lord ; He now said to them, " Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Peter stepped into the vessel, and, along with the others, brought the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty-three. The words of John are, " And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken." At that time they lived in a world of miracles.

Jesus now summoned them to the simple meal which He had prepared, saying unto them, " Come and dine." He then took of the bread, and the fish, and gave it unto them ; but no one durst ask him, " Who art thou ?" knowing that it was the Lord. How well our Apostle knows how to express the deepest meaning in the most child-like language ! The disciples knew that He was their Master, but no one had courage to ask him ; they knew that He was the same Jesus who had formerly walked in the midst of them ; and yet that he was different, for since that time He had risen from the dead. A reverential awe, arising from being in the presence of a superior being,

prevented them addressing him as formerly. Thus the Evangelist describes, in simple words, the impression which our Lord made upon them after his resurrection.

The disciples receive their meal from the hands of their Lord, and enjoy it in silence and reverence, as if it were a holy supper ; for, like the last supper, it was full of the deepest signification to the apostles. How could any thing which was done by the Lord of heaven, in his human form, and after his resurrection, fail to be of mighty importance ? Had not all which He had done upon earth, a divine signification ? His miraculous cures, and raising men from the dead, were not merely acts of compassionate love, but were visible testimonies of his power to free mankind from the bonds of sin and of death.

Thus this last meal of which our Lord, now risen from the grave, partook along with his future messengers of peace, was a symbol, pledge, and seal, both of their fellowship with him, and of the happy future which he had promised them. This wonderful draught of fishes was a counterpart to the former fishing upon the same sea, at which all who had been present were seized with terror, and Peter, falling at the feet of Jesus, had cried out, “ Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord ! ” when Jesus had said to the newly chosen disciple, “ Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men ; ” and when, after having brought their ships to land, they had forsaken all, and followed him.

The last fishing had a reference to the sending forth

of the disciples into the world, where, without the visible agency of their Lord, they were to catch men. It took place at his word, and nearly in the same manner as the first, though on this occasion he remained at a distance, and they did not immediately recognise him. It was only from the miracle which followed that they discovered him, whose power had so blessed their labours, to be Jesus; for they had toiled during the whole night, and had taken nothing. He now led them to the meal which he had prepared for them; this and the miraculous draught of fishes, were as much as to say, "Without me ye can do nothing; but be comforted, for I come at the hour when ye require me; ere you imagine it, I am there, and fill your nets. The world will henceforward be the great sea in which you will catch men, of every degree, for the kingdom of heaven. Do not despair though you toil during the whole night in vain; but let your loins be girded, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord; and when He cometh, verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Thus the simple history of this manifestation of our Lord has a deep and mysterious meaning, referring to the efficacy of the apostles in their calling, to the blessing from above, and to that heavenly marriage-feast, after their labours are finished, of which Jesus had so often spoken to them. The actions of our Lord are humble and simple, like his character, preaching

and parables ; but, at the same time, are, like them, full of divine signification.

Now commences the conversation of Jesus with Simon Peter ; we may regard it as a court of judgment held by our Lord over his disciple, out of which the latter comes forth justified. Our Lord calls him Simon son of Jonas, which is the name he bore before he became an apostle, and before he received the surname of Peter. Three times he asks him, “ Lovest thou me ? ” because three times he had denied Him. He even asks him more pointedly, and referring to the other disciples, “ Lovest thou me more than these ? ” for Peter had said unto him, “ Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” Such a humiliation of the fallen disciple by the Lord himself whom he had denied, was necessary in order to re-establish him in the faith, and confirm him for ever in that covenant which he had violated.

This was done with earnestness, but with wonderful mercy and lenity. The deeply abased Peter had now ample opportunity to pour out the feelings of his heart, and acknowledge his love to his Master ; and He, the searcher of hearts, graciously received this acknowledgment, and confirmed the renewed covenant of love by the commandment, thrice repeated, “ Feed my lambs, feed my sheep ; ” at the same time adding the prophecy by what death Peter should glorify God. “ When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”

Peter, whose heart had now been lightened of its

burden by his reconciliation with his Master, and who had now regained his former boldness, was induced by the prophecy of Jesus to ask the question regarding John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Upon which he received the evasive answer, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

This reply of our Lord spread itself afterwards among the Christians who believed, that Jesus had said that John should not die, but remain till the return of the Lord to judgment, when his body should be changed. John himself, in the childlike simplicity of his heart, contradicts this opinion, when, repeating the words of our Lord, he writes, "Yet Jesus said not unto him he shall not die, but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This was uttered in contradistinction to the prophecy concerning Peter, "Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not;" the word another, signifying an enemy of the gospel. John, on the contrary, was not to die the death of a martyr. And so it happened,—he died a gentle and natural death; for his exit from this world was peaceful, like his actions and character.

JOHN IN JERUSALEM AFTER THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

We can easily imagine that our Lord spoke much during the forty days succeeding his resurrection to his beloved disciple, of which nothing has been preserved. As Luke relates in his Acts of the Apostles, during this time he gave them commands and promises, instructing them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Probably John had already heard much of this in those conversations which Jesus held with his disciples during the short period before his sufferings, when he withdrew himself from the world into the immediate circle of his faithful followers. What glorious, and at times prophetic words, are contained in John's Gospel, after the 13th chapter ! And what he says, at the conclusion of his history, regarding the signs and wonders which Jesus did, but which he has not written in his book, might well be applied to the words of the Saviour also. The Apostle has transmitted to us as much of the words of our Lord as we require, in order to acknowledge and believe "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." And, in fact, in every single chapter of this precious Gospel we have so rich a treasure, that we may well wonder at the splendour of the whole.

It is self-evident that John was a witness of our Lord's ascent into heaven, and was present at all that was done during the ten days at Jerusalem, and on the feast of Pentecost ; although he himself has not mentioned it. With respect to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, he is distinguished from the other Evangelists as the one who has preserved most of the prophecies of our Lord concerning it, and who has spoken most of the offices and future efficacy of the Comforter, the invisible representative of his glorified Lord and Master. How gladly should we have read the description of that disciple's joy whom Jesus loved, when the fulness of the Spirit descended upon him, and the power of the Highest streams down upon his soul. This, however, is not granted to us ; and in the history of that day in which the baptism of the Holy Ghost took place, the name of John is not even mentioned.

As far as we can learn, John remained in Jerusalem after the feast of Pentecost, and became a witness of the mighty deeds of God which took place. He had a small dwelling here, where he watched over the mother of Jesus with faithful love, until the day of her death, which took place fifteen years after that of her son.

The next time we read of our Apostle is in the beautiful history when he and Peter go to the temple to pray at the time of the evening sacrifice, where they meet the lame man asking for alms. "Look upon us," said Peter, who, along with John, fixed his eyes upon him. He did so, expecting to receive alms ; when Peter, reading his thoughts, said, "Silver and gold have I none ; but such as I have, give

I thee ; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up ; and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God." Thus, Luke detailed the circumstance in his Acts of the Apostles. It made a powerful impression upon the astonished people, who now crowded round the apostles. Peter then stepped forward, and, addressing them, preached Jesus Christ the crucified and risen Lord, the way, the truth, and the life. The consequence was, that many of those that heard the word, believed, and the Christian community increased to five thousand souls. But the enemies of truth, the high priests and scribes, who had slain the Lord of glory, could not rest in quiet, but made the two apostles be seized, and, as it was evening, put them in prison until the next day. Accordingly, on the morrow, they were led before the high council to receive their sentence. Peter, now filled with the Holy Ghost, began to speak, and preached to the high priests and rulers of the people Jesus of Nazareth, whom God hath raised from the dead. In his name, and by his power, the sick man had been made whole ; for in none other is salvation to be found, and there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved. The rulers were astonished when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, for they knew they were unlearned and ignorant men, and knew also they had been with Jesus. They now looked at the

man who had been made whole, who was standing before them ; but they could say nothing against it. The report of the miracle had already spread through all Jerusalem ; so they closed their judgment with threats, and the command that henceforth they should not speak of Jesus to the people, and nowhere teach or preach in his name. But Peter and John, the history continues, answered and said unto them, “ Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye ; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

This is the first occasion on which John appears after the feast of Pentecost, that morning of the new creation dawning on man ; and this, as he so often had done before, in the company of Peter. *Together*, thus writes the sacred historian, they were the instruments of the miraculous cure of the lame man ; *together*, they preached to the people the gospel of Jesus, the crucified one ; and *together*, they underwent the same punishment. Peter, however, is represented as the chief speaker and actor. In this, also, we see the silent and gentle temperament of John, who, as the youngest of the apostles in relation to the eldest, regarded Peter as a father ; on every occasion gave him the precedence, as the apostle most distinguished by our Lord ; and as he seems to have had eloquence at command, always permitted him to speak. It is extremely probable that Jesus himself, who recommended his mother to the care of John, who was the most childlike of the disciples, may also have recommended

him to the care of Peter ; for as he was the disciple whom the Lord loved, he must have been most accustomed to receive love. Thus we see the most silent of the apostles bound in the closest ties to the most active and eloquent ; and as John is seldom mentioned in the Evangelical histories, it is the same way at the commencement of his apostolic office. There lies, if we may so express it, a holy mystery, a shadowy veil over the disciple beloved by our Lord, like that which envelops Lazarus raised from the grave, of whom it is only said, that Jesus loved him. Even over the writings which John has left behind him, there is a faint cloud in which he envelops and conceals himself. As he felt deeply, and loved ardently ; so his spiritual ear seems on that account more open to receive and to hear spiritual things. It was for this reason that, in the solitary island of Patmos, our Lord revealed to him distant futurity, and conferred on our Apostle the honour of being the last of the prophets. Who is it that is able to follow the depths of such a spirit, and of such a heart ?

JOHN UNDERGOING PERSECUTION IN JERUSALEM,
ALONG WITH THE OTHER APOSTLES.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out at the feast of Pentecost, the first Christian community was the beginning and type of the subsequent Christian church upon earth. Thus the saying of the prophet was fulfilled, that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;" and also, the expression of Jesus to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Salvation is of the Jews." Therefore the Lord had commanded the disciples, that they should commence the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, and afterwards be witnesses unto him in Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. This took place amidst great struggles and persecutions; and the apostles were the first who were destined to drink the same cup as Jesus drank, and be baptized with his baptism. As the number of the faithful was daily increased by the preaching and miracles of the apostles, they were seized, by command of the high council, and put into prison. But the angel of the Lord came by night, opened the prison-doors, and let them go forth; upon which they once more began to teach and preach the words of life. They were now summoned before the council, scourged, and commanded to preach no more in the name of Jesus. They then,

as Luke relates in his Acts of the Apostles, “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name ; and daily, in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” It was a glorious time for Zion ; for it seemed as if the tree was now about to bud, and bring forth fruit. But, alas ! it did not happen.

The enemies of truth were hereby still more embittered, and the Lord, in the person of his saints, was still more hotly persecuted. Stephen, a faithful witness of the gospel, was torn from the council-chamber, and cruelly stoned by the raging populace ; thus being the first martyr who sealed the truth of the Christian religion with his blood. As the rage of wild beasts increases after they have tasted blood, so the persecution now became more violent ; and many Christians being constrained to leave the inimical city, took refuge in Judea and Samaria, carrying the seed of the gospel into those desert lands, where it sprung up and bare much fruit.

The conversion of the Samaritans was the commencement and preparation for casting down the wall which had hitherto separated the Jews from the Gentiles. In the kingdom of grace, as well as in the kingdom of nature, every development takes place by degrees, and generally in the midst of struggles and tempests. Thus it happened with the progress of the kingdom of heaven, through the persecutions in Jerusalem. Samaria was like the entrance through which the new faith was received by the Gentiles ;

and the Samaritans, who, on account of their self-chosen worship, had been regarded as idolaters by the people of God, were the first-fruits of the heathen.

The apostles remained in Jerusalem, protected by the Lord, who had commanded them to abide here and take care of his flock, waiting till He should call them to a distance. Samaria was assigned as their first field of labour; for, when the gospel had taken root here, Peter and John were sent by the rest of the apostles to lay their hands upon those Samaritans who had been converted and baptized by Philip; in order that their reception into the Christian community might be sealed by prayer, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit. They travelled, at the same time, through Samaria, preaching the gospel in many places, and then returned to Jerusalem.

Our Apostle now spent several years in the capital of the Jewish land; but we have no information either concerning the length of this sojourn, or the blessings attending it. This, however, need not surprise us. Luke might have given it to us in his Acts of the Apostles; but this is no worldly narrative; on the contrary, it is the history of the spreading of the kingdom of heaven, after the disciples of the Lord had received the Holy Spirit and the command to preach the gospel to all nations. The sacred history first describes the planting of the tree of life in the hallowed soil of Judea, and its prosperity in spite of storms and tempests; it then hastens to relate how it took root in all parts of the earth, and in the Gentile world particularly, through the labours of Paul

and his companions. This, however, is not done in order to exalt the names of the messengers of Christ, and to recount the simple fruits of their ministry ; on the contrary, the one Name in whom alone is salvation, and the one Man whom God has appointed to judge the world, far outshines, and, by the splendour of his glory, extinguishes the lustre of every other. On this account, John and his labours for the community in Jerusalem are not brought into the foreground ; we may, nevertheless, with truth conjecture, that the soft and gentle spirit of the beloved disciple would be shown in calming and consoling the first Christians during their afflictions. Thus the Lord made him whom He loved tarry the longest for him in the place which had been the chief seat of his earthly pilgrimage, where He had found his cross, his grave, and the scene of his glory.

The following we gather from scattered passages in the sacred writings : When the apostle Paul came to Jerusalem, in the third year after his conversion, he found the apostles still together, or at least in Judea. Paul did not see John during his fourteen days' sojourn in Jerusalem ; but he saw the two apostles Peter and James, the brother, or to speak more correctly, the cousin of our Lord ; for he was the son of Alpheus and the sister of the mother of Jesus. Probably our Evangelist was then with his brother and the other apostles and disciples, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. For the servants and messengers of the Lord never passed their time in inactivity ; and it may be inferred, both from their characters and their

history, which is preserved to us, that they continued preaching the gospel round about ; at the same time, always extending their circle of usefulness. It appears also, that Paul's principal object in coming to Jerusalem, to which he was probably moved by divine impulse, was to converse with Peter, who had been the first of the apostles, to open the gate of heaven to the heathen world, and who had immediately preceded the Apostle of the Gentiles in his great work. The Lord doeth all things well ; He changeth the times and the seasons ; in the kingdom of God there is no less order and gradation, than in the kingdom of nature. The great work of the calling of the Gentiles was to be commenced by the oldest Jewish apostle ; and it took place in the conversion of the centurion Cornelius, and his house. But the apostles might well be astonished, when they heard from Paul how God had appointed him to preach the gospel to the heathen.

Ten years later Paul came from Antioch, with his assistant Barnabas, to attend the assembly of the apostles at Jerusalem ; when it was agreed, that the Greeks, that is to say, the Gentile Christians, should be freed from the observance of the Levitical law, Acts xv.—which was another step in the gradual emancipation of believers in the new dispensation, from the thralldom of the old. John is not expressly mentioned as being present at this meeting ; yet it appears that he was, from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, ii. 9. “ And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was

given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship ; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." The expression, " seemed to be pillars," denotes that they were distinguished from the other apostles by their character, wisdom, and the gifts with which God had endowed them. The James who is named here was not the brother of John, for the latter had been beheaded some years before by the command of king Herod Agrippa : this James was the son of Alphaeus, and appears to have been the minister and director of the little community at Jerusalem. Our Evangelist is not mentioned again in the Acts of the Apostles ; for they are henceforward exclusively occupied in narrating the extension of the gospel amongst the heathen, by means of Paul and his assistants.

JOHN LEAVES JERUSALEM.

The time which John passed in Jerusalem cannot be exactly ascertained. Soon after the assembling of the apostles, Peter left the city and went to Antioch, the capital of Syria, where he found a considerable congregation, and from which he travelled in the service of the gospel through the neighbouring lands and provinces of Asia. Perhaps John made a missionary tour at the same time ; although the tradi-

tion that he preached the gospel in Parthia is not sufficiently attested. When Paul came to Jerusalem for the last time, he visited James, the son of Alpheus, also called "James the younger" and "James the just." John, however, is not mentioned, as would probably have been done if he had still remained in Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 18. James soon after died the death of a martyr; he was condemned to death by the supreme council on account of his bold testimony for Christ—was stoned by the people—and, after he had uttered the prayer for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he was put to death by the blow of a club. This took place soon after the departure of the Apostle Paul, who, by his appeal to the Roman Emperor, had withdrawn himself from the rage of the Jews; about sixty years after the birth of our Lord.

The time now approached for that judgment which the Lord had pronounced over Jerusalem, and the Jewish people. "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." The Jews themselves hastened this fearful judgment. The more the gospel of Jesus Christ prevailed, and the power of God manifested itself in a thousand hearts, the more obstinately did these deluded ones resist the word of truth, and seek to stop for ever the progress of the gospel. As the

Lord had prophesied, many false Messiahs now arose, who attracted numerous followers,—a proof that the time had arrived which Jesus had compared to the spring whose approach may be known by the blossoming of the trees. But as they had misunderstood the times and rejected the true Messiah, God sent them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. Everywhere, excited by the arts of those deceivers, rebellion and uproar were heard, and hordes of plunderers ranged through the country, and wasted the land of their fathers. This compelled the Romans to use means of restraint and harsh oppressive measures, which still farther embittered the Jews, and excited them to resistance. At length a Roman army, under the command of Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, invested Jerusalem, where the rebels were now arming themselves for a vigorous resistance. But this was not the time appointed for the judgment to take place ; the Roman general withdrew his army ; it was like the respite of mercy before the flood, while Noah was building the ark : but no one gave heed.

Many Christians had long before this quitted Jerusalem, remembering the prophecies and warnings of our Lord ; and the others who had remained behind now followed them. Thus the believers, obeying the warning of Jesus, escaped that fearful judgment which shortly after burst upon the devoted city ; the records of which are perhaps the most terrible preserved in the history of the world.

About this time, towards the end of the reign of the emperor Nero, that cruel persecutor of the Christians,

probably in the year of our Lord 66, when the apostles Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom, John quitted Jerusalem. He was perhaps the only apostle who survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and the scattering of the Jewish people ; the type of that great coming, when He shall appear amidst the clouds of heaven as the shepherd dividing his flock, and as the righteous King, “ glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

JOHN IN EPHEBUS.

We have little or no account of the life and actions of our Apostle after he quitted Jerusalem. It is certain, however, that he passed the latter part of his life in Asia Minor, principally in Ephesus. We have no means of knowing exactly what time he spent there ; but the ancient tradition, which says he preached the gospel in Parthia and India, seems to me improbable. John was neither called nor appointed to undertake such far extended journeys as Paul, Peter, and the other apostles were ; besides, his temper and character do not seem to have been suited to it. After he had resided for some time in the Jewish land, and, following in the footsteps of his Master, had manifested his glory in characters of silent love, another

dwelling-place was appointed to him, namely Ephesus and its environs.

Meanwhile, we cannot doubt that during the intermediate time his days were spent in works of mercy and love, actively fulfilling the duties of his high calling, and wherever he went dispensing the bread of life. He sought not his own glory, but that of his Master.

Ephesus was peculiarly fitted for being an apostolical residence,—a far-famed commercial town, the capital of Lesser Asia; it lay on the Mediterranean Sea, almost in the centre of the three great portions of the then known world. It was the most convenient point whence to travel towards Egypt, Syria, or Greece; on which account it was the resort of an immense number of men from all parts of the globe. Ephesus was to Asia Minor what Antioch was to Syria, or Alexandria to Egypt; and thus it became the place in the kingdom of God whence the light of the gospel shone over the whole earth.

The Apostle Paul had founded the church in Ephesus, and afterwards sent thither his beloved Timotheus, in order to confirm the believers in the faith. Paul had died the death of a martyr, and Timothy does not seem to have been long in following him. Thus this most important church required an apostolical head; and this the more imperatively, because the rich and luxurious Ephesus was the seat both of heathen worldly wisdom, and of Judaism; so the gospel was in danger of being either choked among the thorns of persecution, or obscured by the

errors of sophistry. Here, therefore, our Lord placed the disciple whom He loved.

Ephesus now became to John another Jerusalem. As he had formerly preached the gospel through Judea and Samaria, so he did not now confine himself to Ephesus, but travelled through the neighbourhood, confirming the existing churches, and founding new ones. In this manner the labours of the Apostle resembled the three years' ministry of our Lord, who, going out from Jerusalem and returning to it as a central point, with unwearied diligence enlightened the benighted regions of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. In his Gospel also, John takes the sacred festivals of the Jews, particularly the passover, as the eras that mark the principal events of his Master's life ; exhibiting them as the beacon lights, which governed his course ; or as the tropics of that Sun of Righteousness, which was to spread light and salvation over the whole earth.

In Asia Minor, at various distances from Ephesus, lay many cities in which there were Christian churches, such as Smyrna, Thyatira, Pergamus, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, &c. where also the holy Apostle laboured. The early Fathers of the church speak in the most glowing terms of the power and love with which he served his God ; and his name lived amidst the blessings and praises of the Christians, in the beautiful land of Asia ; until, as in Jerusalem, their candlesticks were removed out of their places, because they had left their first love, and ceased to value the happiness which had been preached to them in the

name of Jesus. And because they had rejected the Sun, a dull and gloomy crescent arose, striving with its faint beams to dispel the darkness of the barren and desert waste.

JOHN IN BANISHMENT.

The history of the lives and actions of the holy Apostles becomes generally dark and gloomy, as we approach the termination of their career. In the writings of the New Testament we find little information regarding them, and that little is scattered at wide intervals; for example, throughout the numerous Epistles of the active and far-travelled Apostle Paul. Many names of those first messengers of the gospel, such as Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Matthew, &c. are never mentioned again; and why should they be so, if the extension and prosperity of the kingdom of God do not demand it? They preached not themselves, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. The sum of their history is comprehended in the injunction of our Lord, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and in the prophecy, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake," Matt. xxiv. 9. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever

killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." John xvi. 2, 3. These soldiers of the cross did not wish to be accounted worthy in their own persons ; but, as the representatives and messengers of Jesus Christ, were well content that they themselves should be eclipsed by the brilliancy of that light with which they illuminated the surrounding darkness. Their life on earth was hid with Christ in God, and has now been long manifested with Christ in glory. Yet in those places where they dispensed the blessings of divine light, they were regarded with love and thankfulness as the instruments of the Holy Spirit ; and many traditions regarding their glorious deaths were preserved and transmitted to posterity. In this manner we have much intelligence regarding them, collected by the Fathers of the church during the first century, which has been treasured up in their writings.

Although these traditions are not always of sufficient authority, yet they serve to prove that the names of the apostles stood in high estimation long after their decease ; and they serve also to throw considerable light over their lives, actions, and writings.

One tradition informs us that John, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, travelled from Ephesus to Palestine, and there held a meeting with several of the apostles and kinsmen of Jesus. Although there is nothing improbable in this account, and although we know enough of the character of our Apostle to believe that he felt the warmest sympathy in the suf-

ferings of his unfortunate country, and would do all in his power to assist the exiles both by deed and by counsel, yet the occurrence is not sufficiently authenticated.

There is another anecdote of our Apostle to which the same remarks may be applied : it is said that during the reign of the cruel emperor Domitian, being at Rome, he was thrown by his command into a caldron of boiling oil, out of which he was drawn unhurt, and afterwards banished to Patmos. The latter circumstance is undeniable, since the Apostle mentions it in his Revelation ; but the miracle which preceded it is unsupported by the same testimony. The tradition of the boiling oil, in all probability, took its rise from the wish to signalize the Apostle by a martyrdom and wonderful deliverance, of which he most certainly did not stand in need.

Thus John came to Patmos, a desert and rocky island in the Egean sea, now called Patino, which the Romans made use of as a place of banishment for criminals. He was banished here, as he himself relates, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. i. 9. We cannot be exactly certain regarding the time when this took place, but most probably it was towards the end of the reign of the cruel emperor Domitian. Here he received the holy revelations of God, which are contained in the last and only prophetic book of the New Testament. As John has described in his Gospel the glory of Jesus as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth ; so he was also deemed worthy to represent to believ-

ers, in prophetic imagery, the conflict upon this earth of the heavenly kingdom with the kingdom of darkness, and its final victory and glory. It is a book full of deep and mysterious things, the greater part of which are still veiled in impenetrable secrecy, but which shall one day be revealed, for the consolation of all true believers during the time of their affliction, and in order to strengthen them in faith and love.

Thus our Lord gave the disciple who had been banished for his sake a new proof that He loved him, by opening his eyes while on this desert island, and enabling him to behold in spirit his future kingdom, and the new and heavenly Jerusalem. He can transform the desert wilderness into a paradise for his faithful servants; and thus John did not feel burdensome the lonely time passed in inactivity and in separation from his flock. We know as little regarding the exact duration of his imprisonment in the island of Patmos, as we do about its commencement; the most authentic records of the ancient Fathers agree, however, in stating that after the death of Domitian, when the emperor Nerva came to the throne, and all those exiled by the former emperor were recalled, that John also was set at liberty, and returned to his residence in Ephesus. How must the faithful in that city, and those of the neighbouring communities, have rejoiced, when God restored to them their beloved father, John the Apostle, and they enjoyed once more the privilege of listening to his instructions!

THE LATTER TIME JOHN PASSED IN EPHEBUS.

How gladly would we possess a circumstantial account of the life of our Apostle during his latter sojourn in Ephesus until the time of his death! How much that is beautiful and edifying would strike our gaze in the picture of such an old man's closing scene! I even think his countenance must have appeared glorified and illuminated during this period, after the visions and revelations which God had vouchsafed to him in Patmos.

Our very natural wishes on this subject, however, have not been gratified. The holy men of God have proved themselves in truth to be messengers in Christ's stead, when they withdrew themselves, after having fulfilled their divine commission, and entirely disappeared from our gaze. Most faithfully did they preserve in their hearts, and practise during their whole lives, the words of the Lord, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." They did not describe their own works and characters, but preached and declared to the world that one Man, who had called them from darkness into his marvellous light. This was their occupation and calling, for which they lived and died; and those works of humility, which they did by the power of God, have as-

cended up after them, like a sweet-smelling savour, to the place where their names stand inscribed.

Do not the character and actions, nay, the very person of John, still continue to dwell in the midst of us? Can we not experience the thoughts of his exalted spirit and the sensations of his pure heart, and can we not quicken ourselves in faith and love, by looking at his example, and listening to his words? If we have eyes to see, ears to hear, or a heart to feel, does he not speak to us in all that which he has written with his immortal pen? May God enable us to appreciate the costly gifts of the Evangelist and Apostle!

The Gospel of St. John was called by the ancient Fathers of the church, in order to distinguish it from the other three, "the Spiritual Gospel," and also "the Heart of Christ," the depth of which no one can comprehend who has not lain upon the bosom of our Lord. And certainly, while the other Evangelists who also accompanied Jesus in his wanderings merely transcribe his words and actions, and circumstantially relate them as they took place, apparently without any ulterior object; the glory of our Lord seems ever to be hovering before the soul of John while he is writing. The three former describe the human pilgrimage of our Lord upon earth; but John reveals the divine form and glory of the Son of Man; they depict the body, John depicts the soul. Thus the fourfold history describes both the God-man and the Son of man; and as the New Testament is the key of the Old, so the Gospel of John is the key and key-stone of the rest.

What a simple and wonderful foundation, on which the eternal structure of the kingdom of God is erected into a holy temple of the Lord, and a habitation of God through the Spirit! Truly, the four Gospels are a miracle, humble in outward form, like our Lord himself, but inwardly full of glory, grace, and truth.

John wrote his in Ephesus, whether before or after his banishment is immaterial, though the latter is the more probable. He bore it long in his heart before he began to write it; when it was done, however, it took a place exalted far above all time and change. Many old Fathers maintain, and it is besides extremely probable, that John, in composing it, had in view the refutation of the errors of certain heretics and unbelievers. There were then men in Lesser Asia, who sought to crush or falsify Christianity; and if John referred to them in his Gospel, he certainly took the best means of refuting their errors by developing the truth in the most masterly manner, and by eloquently representing it in all its heavenly simplicity. So when one brings a light into a dark chamber, the darkness disappears; and when the tints of the morning cast their roseate hue, the night fades away from the heavens.

In his three Epistles, but particularly in the first, he makes particular mention of those false teachers; while he earnestly warns Christians against their deceptions, and admonishes them to try spirits whether they are of God, and to remain steadfast in the faith. These Epistles are perhaps the last of those writings which the Apostle has left behind him. The first

seems to have been a circular, or pastoral letter, addressed to the numerous congregations of Lesser Asia, who probably forwarded it from one to another. For this reason, it wants the form of a letter, as well as the superscription and the benediction at the conclusion. The Apostle, also, addresses his readers in a peculiar fatherly manner, calls them his children and little children, and with benevolent condescension often makes use of the confidential "we," instead of using the admonitory "you." They all knew the beloved and still youthfully-minded old man, who had often prayed in the midst of them ; and they were all personally known to him. They required no address, and no salutation ; it was enough that the Epistle was from the disciple who had leaned on the bosom of our Lord. It bears in every line the impress of his spirit, and is full of holy earnestness and love, child-like, yet manly.

The two other short Epistles are directed to single individuals. The first, addressed to a Christian lady of the name of Tyria, contains a friendly exhortation to remain steadfast in truth and love, and to beware of false teachers and deceivers. The other Epistle, which was written to a friend of the Apostle, of the name of Gaius, both contains his praises and a recommendation to show love and hospitality to those Christians who had been persecuted on account of the faith, and exiled from their homes. The particular occasion on which it was written, as well as the relation of Gaius to the Apostle, are unknown to us. If we had known it, we might perhaps still better per-

ceive and admire the peculiar union of tender love towards Christians, with righteous anger against the enemies of truth, so peculiarly developed in the character of John. The preservation of those short letters to mere individuals, is another proof of the high estimation in which John was regarded, both by his contemporaries and their immediate descendants. They would not permit even a single page of his writings to be destroyed ; and thus, those simple Epistles have survived the lapse of centuries, and the destruction of mighty kingdoms. In the two latter Epistles John named himself “the elder,” or bishop, which has a similar but more pleasing signification than teacher or director of the Christian community ; for it seems to refer to his personal connection with it. It is also more lowly than if he had named himself “Apostle ;” for he now no longer travelled about, but visited at intervals the Christian churches from his dwelling-place, which he had fixed in the midst of them.

JOHN AND THE ERRING BUT REPENTANT
YOUNG MAN.

Ephesus was now, as Jerusalem had formerly been, the residence of the Apostle ; whence he visited the Christian churches in the neighbouring towns and villages, appointed the ministers and teachers, and carefully preserved the purity of faith and doctrine.

The manner in which he laboured here, and the struggle he maintained with the numerous enemies of Christ, particularly with those teachers of error who mingled the pure truths of the gospel with earthly traditions, has not been transmitted to us. Nevertheless, there is one anecdote belonging to this era, which Clement, bishop of Alexandria, one of the Fathers of the church, has circumstantially related ; not as an uncertain tradition, but as a history well known and faithfully remembered. It is as follows :

After John had returned from Patmos to Ephesus, he visited the neighbouring congregations, in order to appoint bishops, and to arrange the church government. On one occasion, when he had preached the gospel in a town not far from Ephesus, admonishing and encouraging the brethren, he beheld a young man of distinguished appearance, and of a countenance which betokened both a fiery spirit and pre-eminent mental talent. The Apostle turned to the bishop of

the church with the words, "In the presence of Christ and this assembly, I solemnly commend this young man to thy care." The bishop, upon this, undertook the charge of his education, promising to do all in his power for him. He took him to his house, entertained, educated and instructed him, until he judged him worthy of receiving the rite of baptism.

Afterwards, however, when the bishop had somewhat relaxed in his superintendence, the young man fell into bad company, where he was enticed into drunkenness and immoral practices, and afterwards into midnight robbery and theft. Thus he progressed in wickedness; and, as a fiery horse that starts aside from the mountain path falls into the abyss, so his violent nature, after he had once quitted a virtuous course, plunged him into destruction.

He now began to despair of the mercy of God, and no longer hoped for salvation; in order, therefore, to execute greater and bolder misdeeds, he united his companions into a robber band, of which he became the captain, and rendered the whole neighbourhood insecure.

Some time having elapsed, John was again summoned to visit the same flock; and when every thing had been set in order, he said to the bishop, "Where is the pledge with which I intrusted thee in the presence of the Lord and this congregation?" The bishop at first was alarmed, lest some one had falsely accused him to the Apostle, of breach of faith with regard to some earthly possession. But when John said, "I demand from thee the soul of thy brother,

the young man with whom I intrusted thee!" the old man sighed, and weeping, replied, "Alas! he is dead!" "Dead?" asked John, "of what death did he die?" "He is dead to God," replied the bishop, "he is lost to Christ, he is a robber. Instead of being now a member of the church, yonder mountain is infested with his banditti!"

When the Apostle heard this, lamenting bitterly, he exclaimed, "Alas! to what a careless watchman have I intrusted the soul of my brother?" Upon this, he hastily left the assemblage, and procuring a horse and a guide, proceeded to the neighbourhood where the robbers were encamped. He was soon arrested by some of the gang, and led into the presence of the captain. When the latter beheld the aged Apostle, his first impulse was to fly, but John held him back, called him his son, and promised him forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. He then took him under his own superintendence, giving him spiritual instruction, and afterwards led him back to the congregation, an example of true repentance and regeneration.

We cannot doubt that in many instances John showed similar faithfulness as a shepherd, and equal zeal in leading back to the paths of truth and holiness those who had been seduced from the right way by the numerous temptations of that corrupt age. The numerous admonitions and warnings, contained in his Epistles, prove how near this subject lay to his heart, as well as the joy which he took in those who walked in righteousness, and proved themselves to be brethren in the truth.

THE MIRACLES WHICH JOHN PERFORMED.

In the life of a man of God such as John, nothing can be unimportant ; for this reason we may well ask, what miracles he performed ? Supernatural occurrences necessarily belong to the character of a divine manifestation ; for a manifestation of God is of itself a miracle, being a disclosure from the invisible world. The miraculous powers of Jesus Christ were necessary proofs that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord and Saviour of men. He himself refers to them as a testimony of this fact ; and John says, in his Gospel, that the Lord by those signs of divine power and might manifested his glory. They were proofs and tokens that He had power to loose men from the bonds of sin and of death, and to remove the barrier that separated earth and heaven ; they were also necessary to perfect the picture of Jesus Christ, as the image of God, and as his Son born of a woman. As He calls his own miracles the works of his Father, so he imparted to his apostles power and strength to perform the same miracles in his name which He himself had done. These powers necessarily belonged to the apostolic office, as being the sure means of proving to mankind that they were the messengers of Christ ; for no apostle ever made use of them to glorify himself, any more than our Lord did.

There is no doubt that these divine gifts had been imparted to our Apostle ; yet we never read in the Scriptures of John performing any miracle. Even at the cure of the lame man in Jerusalem, he appears to have stood by as a silent and inactive spectator ; all being done through the medium of Peter's words and actions. This is the only circumstance of the kind at which he is described as being present ; for the fact of his imparting the Holy Ghost to the converts made by Philip in Samaria, by means of laying his hands upon them, was but the consequence of his apostolical office. In the silent usefulness of the beloved disciple, as it is depicted to us in his Gospel, without the brilliancy of miracle, there seems to be another indication of the peculiar modesty of his character, in which we behold the mild lustre of the moon veiled by the evening cloud.

Meanwhile antiquity, in her reverence for our Apostle, appears to have been of a different opinion, and to have considered miracles indispensable in the history of St. John. Among other things it is related, that on one occasion John and several of the brethren drank out of a poisoned cup ; the latter fell on the ground in the agonies of death, while he not only was unharmed but was the means of restoring them to life and vigour. Although this history contains nothing improbable in itself, for our Lord had promised his apostles that they should drink poison uninjured ; yet it is not grounded on sufficient testimony, and we cannot place it in the rank of undoubted truths. It is for this reason that painters have generally represent-

ed the holy Apostle with a cup in one hand, out of which a serpent is raising its head. Were our history symbolical, we might with truth say in the same manner, that John must have drunk many cups full of deadly poison ; namely, the poison of lying and deceit, presented to him by the enemies of Christians and falsifiers of the truth. But as Paul escaped unscathed from the viper in the island of Crete, so John also was unharmed by the poison of heretics and slanderers ; and, if we may believe his testimony, a life in Christ can never be said to be in danger. For this reason the anecdote, as well as the manner in which painters represent the Apostle, may well please us ; although, for want of sufficient evidence, we can hardly regard the fact as authenticated.

The tradition, also, that John destroyed the temple of Diana of the Ephesians with his own hand, causing it to be razed to the ground, is also without doubt allegorical. This miracle was probably performed by the preaching of the gospel ; there being no need forcibly to destroy idolatry, as it would fall to pieces from its own worthlessness. Hence it came to pass, as the Roman governor Pliny wrote to the emperor Trajan, that the idolatrous temples and altars were empty and deserted ; for they were gradually disappearing from the kingdom of light and truth. In this sense Cyrill, an old Father of the church, with good reason might call John the destroyer of the temple of Diana.

There is one thing, however, which is well attested, that John, during his latter sojourn in Ephesus,

raised from the dead a deceased person ; although the minute circumstances of the case have not been transmitted to us. Wherever it was necessary to glorify the name of Jesus, we may be certain that John would make use of the miraculous power imparted to him as a messenger of the Lord, in order to restore to sight the spiritually blind, and awaken the spirituall dead to a new life. And how great must the number of those be whom he, during his long life, led to their God, and admitted into the fold of the Lord !

JOHN'S DISCIPLES AND FRIENDS.

We cannot form a better idea of the position of John in the church at Ephesus, than by picturing him in the form of a benevolent and serious, yet cheerful father of a family, in the midst of his household circle. His Epistles authorize us to make this comparison ; in them he addresses the Christians as "children" and "little children," sometimes also as "brethren ;" he also makes a distinction between "fathers, young men, and children," and then again addresses them collectively by the term "beloved." Those who loved and revered the Apostle as their spiritual father must have formed a numerous family, especially if we include all whom he diligently visit-

ed, and who lived not merely in Ephesus, but in the neighbouring towns and villages.

We can easily imagine that our Apostle, like the apostles Peter and Paul, had some among the many who were bound to him by the ties of love, to whom he stood in a closer relation, and who may with propriety be named his disciples. The most distinguished of these were Ignatius and Polycarp; the first became afterwards bishop of Antioch, and, in the reign of the emperor Trajan, on account of his bold confession, was carried to Rome, and thrown to wild beasts for the amusement of the populace. As they were leading him away to suffer the death of a martyr, he said, "I am the wheat of Christ, which must be ground by the teeth of wild beasts before becoming pure bread." In like manner, many thousand Christians ended their lives at the same time in joyful faith and confession of the truth; but so much the more did the kingdom of God prosper and increase. Polycarp, the other disciple of the Apostle John, had been appointed by him bishop of the community at Smyrna; and antiquity is full of his praises for faith and boldness in the service of the Lord: he also sealed his confession with his blood. When he was about ninety years old, there arose a tumult among the Jews and heathens, who with wild cries demanded his death. The old man fled from his flock to an estate in the neighbourhood of Smyrna; but his retreat was betrayed, he was taken by armed men, and carried back to the city. In vain the governor tried to persuade him to renounce Christianity, if

only in appearance, and to pay divine honours to the image of the emperor : he was inexorable. The enraged populace now desired his death with still greater violence, and demanded that he should be burned alive. It took place accordingly ; the old man advanced with joy to meet his fiery death, and his body, says the story, glittered in the flames like gold in the furnace. It was the general opinion of antiquity that Polycarp was the angel of the church in Smyrna, mentioned in Revelations ii. 8. and that the following verses are addressed to him.

There are also various other names of lesser note, recorded as those of the disciples and pupils of the Apostle ; for it is undoubted, that by word and example he induced many to become the servants of the Lord. It is an undoubted fact, that where such a chosen servant of God arises, he does not remain alone ; but arouses many others to follow his example, and become his assistants in the cause of truth. The names of these men are now lost, as the lesser lights are extinguished in the lustre of the greater ; or perhaps, following their Master's example of humility, they themselves may have concealed them. Lesser Asia continued, for many years after the death of John, to be a green and flourishing garden of the Lord, full of springs of living water ; but when these in later times were dried up, then the golden candlesticks also were thrown down from the altar.

There is another story regarding John, which an old and pious author of the fifth century has transmitted to us from the writings of the Fathers. We

shall relate it, because it is characteristic of the disposition of the beloved disciple. It happened that he possessed a tame partridge, which he was one day caressing and fondling, when a forester entered the apartment. He was astonished to see the venerable Bishop of the Ephesian church amusing himself with such an insignificant bird. Upon which John asked him, why he did not always keep his bow on the stretch? Upon which the huntsman replied, "If I did so, the string would relax, and the bow would lose its elasticity." "Then," said John, "wonder no longer if the human mind also, that it may not sink under the weight of severe thought, sometimes has recourse to amusement in order to enliven itself." It appears to me that, by this mild reproof, the Apostle showed the huntsman the rashness of his speech, and at the same time said no more to him than he could easily understand. We may also remark from this anecdote, the simple nature of John, which found pleasure even in a tame little bird; and perhaps regarded the bright red eye of his favourite with the same sort of feelings as our Lord beheld the lilies of the field.

JOHN ON HIS DEATH-BED.

In John were fulfilled the words of the royal Psalmist, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree ; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to show that the Lord is upright : he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Psalm xcii. 12-15.

John attained a good old age ; and though the church historians vary with regard to the exact duration of his life, yet they all agree that he lived beyond ninety, probably to ninety-eight years of age ;—the days of his pilgrimage thus nearly equalling those of the ancient patriarchs. Ephesus and the parts of Lesser Asia, where he spent the latter period of his life, may be compared to another Canaan ; as the earlier period, when he enjoyed the society of our Lord, resembled the patriarchal times.

John long survived the first judgment which God passed on the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish people, because they had rejected their Saviour the Lord of glory ; he was to have the satisfaction of beholding the spreading of the gospel and the founding of Christian churches in all parts of the earth, and was the last of the apostles who, as a good and faithful servant, entered into the joy of his Lord.

It is strange that the disciple whom Jesus loved, and

who lay upon his bosom, should tarry the longest upon earth. Well might we have expected that he should sigh for the rest of his Lord, and, like Paul, desire to depart and be with Christ. But there is no trace of this in the Epistles which he wrote in his old age, and he nowhere expresses that longing for a future life and a heavenly inheritance, which we find in the writings of the other apostles, Paul and Peter. In this also we behold the character and spirit of the beloved disciple, who was a living personification of the words of our Lord, "I in you, and ye in me." That living and abiding in Jesus as the fruit does on the vine, was most peculiarly the characteristic of him who lay on his bosom; for the Lord whom he bore in his heart was never distant from him. The beautiful parable of the bridegroom and the bridegroom's friend, which John transmitted to us from the mouth of the Baptist, was gloriously fulfilled in his own person. He therefore remained willingly upon earth in the service of his Master, adorning the church as the bride of the Lamb, and preparing her for the great marriage-day.

He also most assuredly remembered that word which our Lord addressed to Peter after his resurrection, when the latter questioned him regarding the future destiny of John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And thus, in humility and patience, he waited the summons of his Lord to lay down his mortal body; having constantly in his mind the sentiment he strove to impress upon others, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we

know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Even a longing for home has its delight, when one is on the road to that home, and sees it from afar.

What a blessing, joy, and honour for the churches and congregations in Lesser Asia, to have the beloved disciple of their Lord so long in the midst of them! and to form, along with him, a beautiful picture of a household and family of God upon earth! They also beheld in the aged Christian a living proof, that, when the outer man becomes old and decay approaches, the inner man may remain young in faith, hope, and love, and renew itself from day to day.

The Lord came at last, however, to recall his faithful servant to his heavenly home. John, when he was no longer able to walk, made himself be supported by two youths and led into the congregation. Here he appeared, for the last time, as a father among his children; for he knew that his hour was come:—and how must his countenance have shone illuminated with joy! The time for a glorious death-bed song, like those of Jacob and Moses in their last hours, was past; for prophecy had been fulfilled, death had been conquered, sin had been expiated, eternal justice had been satisfied, and the Holy One had been anointed. The whole life of the Apostle had been a song of praise for the appearance of the eternal Word of life in the flesh, and for his glory full of grace and truth; and in like manner, his last breath evinced the spirit which had ever animated his heart.

"Children, love one another!" were his last words,

which he several times repeated, "Children, love one another!"

Thus that disciple whom Jesus had loved fell asleep, and was buried at Ephesus. Because Jesus had said to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come," the report had spread during the life-time of John that he would never die, but remain upon earth until the day of judgment, and enter heaven without passing through the gates of death. Although John contradicts this opinion in the conclusion of his Gospel, and though his grave at Ephesus was also a proof to the contrary, yet the saying long continued, "He lives, and only slumbers in the tomb." It testifies at least in what reverence his name was held, both in the Eastern and Western land. We also know and testify, though in another manner, "this disciple has not died." He lives, and will still live, in the church of the Lord upon earth, until the end of time. We can listen to the words of the Apostle, until we see Him whom he loved and whom he preached, in the following words: "And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

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